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OLD TALES *from* SPAIN

FOR A LONG TIME SHE WANDERED

THROUGH SPAIN

TRAVEL AND
ADVENTURE LIBRARY
FOR YOUNG FOLKS

OLD TALES FROM SPAIN

By
Felipe Alfau

Illustrated by RHEA WELLS

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK

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TO

ESTRELLITA

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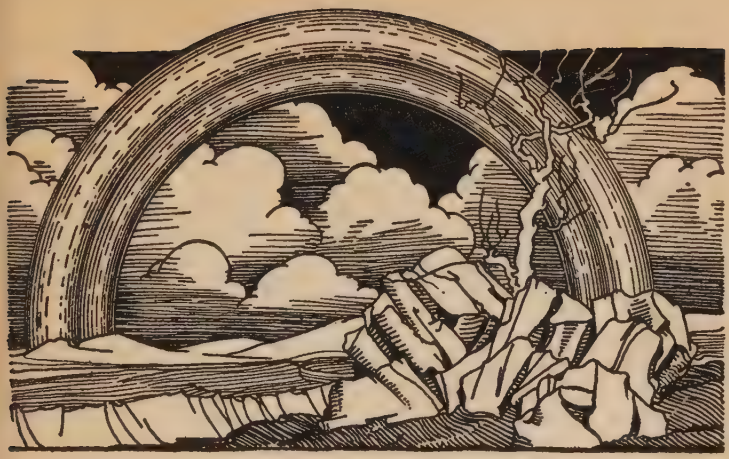
OLD TALES *from* SPAIN



THE RAINBOW

ONE day the peaceful village of N—— was aroused by a strange visitor. He walked through the main street as one who owns the world: an air which contrasted decidedly with his appearance. He was of good height and build. Ruffled hair and a small pointed beard set the boundaries to his pale face, in which his smiling eyes were set like two precious stones filled with light and looked at everything intently as if discovering

things that no one else could see. The abundant holes in his tights were carefully held together about his long thin legs by a few remaining and faithful threads, and his elbows protruded ostentatiously through his doublet sleeves. A leather box which he carried under his arm was all his luggage.

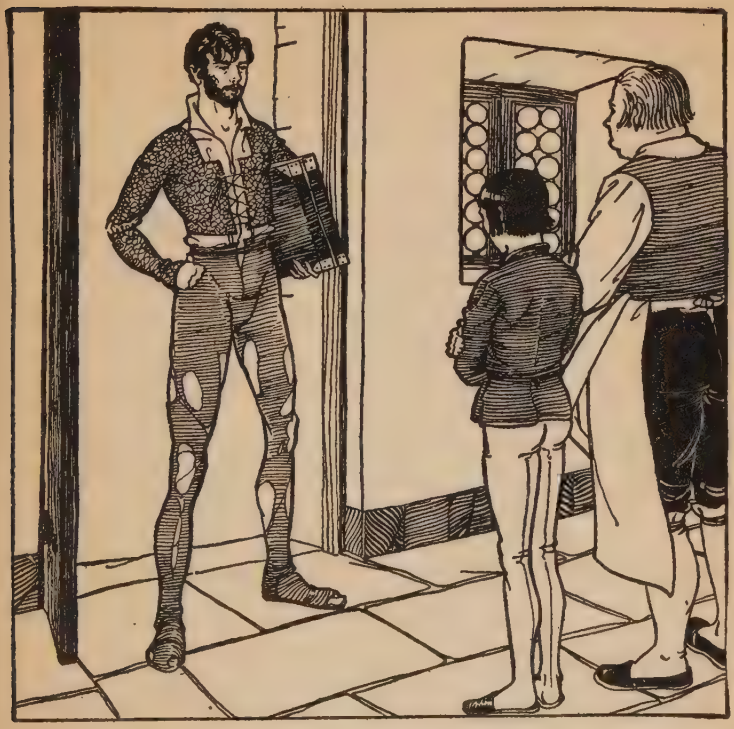
As he walked through the street everyone turned to stare at him. Really, the people in the peaceful village of N—— were exceedingly curious.

The strange visitor stopped in front of a house of fair proportions and studied it minutely, as if weighing all its good and bad qualities, and then his eyes rested upon a sign over the door that said: HOSTERIA.

At the sight of this sign he seemed to make up his mind immediately and entered the house with resolution.

He was met by a stout man who was undoubtedly the *hostelero,* and readily he informed him:

"I want the cheapest room you have." But anyone who had not heard him would have judged by his man-



"I WANT THE CHEAPEST ROOM YOU HAVE"

ner that he was demanding the best suite of rooms in the place.

The hostelero looked at him suspiciously and scrutinized the box under his arm, but the strange visitor remained impassive under this examination. Then the hostelero, apparently not very well satisfied with his inspection, turned hesitatingly to a boy who was watching the visitor with open mouth and eyes, and shouted:

"Hey, Perico, what are you standing there for with your mouth open like a boob? Don't you see we have a customer? Get a move on you and show this—gentleman to the room in the attic that gives onto the backyard."

Perico closed his mouth with a jerk and moved hastily toward the staircase followed by the gentleman, who instead of being annoyed by all this seemed to be greatly amused. Perico kept on turning to look at the visitor so many times, as he ascended the stairs, that once he stumbled and fell on his nose.

At last they arrived. Perico opened the door, and the visitor was led into a very poorly furnished room. The strange visitor dropped his box on the cot, and something clattered inside. Then he faced Perico, whose mouth was again open, and taking one of his hands he slapped a coin in it with such force that Perico gave a frightened jump and ran down the stairs. The visitor followed him with his eyes and then burst out in a loud laugh. Undoubtedly curiosity was very easy to arouse in this world.

★

The strange visitor had been now at the hosteria for some time. When the days were clear he rose up early in the morning and left with his box under his arm. He usually returned at sunset, carrying a picture with him besides the box. But when the weather was bad he slept late and remained in his room by the window without seeing or speaking to anyone.

After some time his room was quite full of pic-

tures representing different quarters of the village or sketches of people, but mainly landscapes of the neighbouring countryside. At last everybody knew he was a painter, and the general curiosity subsided and everyone became used to him.

Perico, who was the hostelero's son, had become a very good friend of the painter and often accompanied him on his excursions and watched him paint.

Once Perico was as usual standing by his friend and was carefully following the skilful brush move over the canvas and comparing the picture with the landscape in front of him when he exclaimed:

"You are not making an exact copy of the landscape. There is, for instance, that tree at the left, which you have omitted. That is not a good picture."

His friend answered without looking at Perico:

"Not every good picture is an exact copy, and not every exact copy is a good picture."

And he kept on working, narrowing his eyes and studying the landscape.

Perico continued to watch the picture in silence, and to his astonishment he saw that his friend was painting a rainbow.

Now, there was no rainbow. Perico looked in all directions to convince himself and then cried:

"You are painting a rainbow. There is no rainbow. Why, we have not even had rain for three weeks!"

The painter turned to Perico this time with slight annoyance in his expression.

"Perico, there is a rainbow. You do not see it because you are not properly trained. But the artist can always see it. Usually people see the rainbow when it rains and the sun comes out, because the rainbow is covered with dust, and then the rain washes off this dust and the sun brings out the colours. But the rainbow is always there, and the artist sees it all the time."

"I should like to be an artist," said Perico thoughtfully, "so I could see what other folk can't see."

"You don't have to be precisely an artist for that. However, I will teach you what I know. When the

opportune moment arrives I shall talk to your father."

By this time the painter was not quite as shabby as when he arrived at the village. He had painted a portrait of the hostelero, who, in exchange, had given him one of the suits of clothes he had outgrown since he came into the possession of the hosteria. However, the painter's bill for room and board was now rather overdue, and he was being constantly annoyed by the hostelero's demands for money.

Once when the latter became particularly pressing the painter said to him:

"Your son is a very bright and promising boy. He has expressed the wish to become an artist. I will teach him the art of painting in exchange for my room and board at your hosteria. What do you say?"

Although the hostelero did not consider art such a respectable and profitable profession as that of innkeeper he had noticed the lack of interest his son showed for all commercial matters and how he used to stand with his mouth open, his attention arrested

by anything that passed in front of his eyes, whether it was a fly or a comet. Therefore the hostelero decided that he might as well let his son study that for which he showed greater interest, and the deal was satisfactorily closed.

The lessons began, and now the painter and Perico went to the country together and painted all day long. Perico was allowed to paint whatever he wished. He was seldom corrected. Only now and then the painter would abandon his work and come close to Perico and observe his progress, making a careless remark or a casual commentary. Most of the time they talked about different things, and Perico found these conversations greatly entertaining and instructive and stopped going about with his mouth open.

After some time other boys in the village wanted also to take painting lessons, and soon the painter managed to gather quite a large class, and all the boys and everybody in the village began to call him the Master.

When the weather was fair the Master would leave the town surrounded by his pals, as he called the boys. They walked until they found a suitable spot, and then all set to work stretching canvases over wooden frames. The Master usually worked on one of his paintings while the boys about him painted whatever they chose or watched him paint.

They all thought him quite wonderful. He always managed to see little details and shades of colour that were unnoticeable to the average eye. He always gave them sound advice that greatly improved their work. But most of the time he spoke to them of many other things that were not connected with painting, and after some time the boys discovered that they were learning many other important things.

At dusk they returned, and as the lamp posts began to be lighted the merry bunch invaded the village with their laughter and joy. They went through the streets running, cheering, and playing, the Master usually making more noise than anybody else, as if

he were but one of the boys. Then the Master would recline on the edge of the fountain that stood in the centre of the plaza, and the boys surrounded him. Then he told them wonderful tales: tales of extraordinary happenings in which the name of the hero always coincided with the name of one of the boys about him; tales of mystery and adventure, and kept them there until dinner time, when they all scattered homeward and he went to his room in the attic.

All the boys loved and admired him. They all looked forward to those evenings when he would recline upon the edge of the fountain, his eyes full of wisdom, sparkling in the shadows like two precious stones, and while he would gaily sprinkle water on their youthful heads and the moon rose high, everything would grow silent as he began:

"Once upon a time . . ."

★

But slowly people began to begrudge the merry times he had with the boys. They began to say that he

was a good-for-nothing and that in the end something bad would come from all that. Parents ostracized him and then forbade their children to be in his company. The children protested and said that he was their best friend, but they had to obey their parents, and the town again was dull, and the Master found himself alone once more.

One day the hostelero came up to his room and said to him:

"I do not want my son to waste his time any longer learning to paint. And as for you, you may pay me all you owe me or get out."

The Master made no answer. He just sat on his cot thinking of how people always enjoy themselves in spoiling everything that is pleasant and good.

At last he sprang to his feet, took his box of paints, and giving a last sad look to the canvases that adorned his room walls he went off.

As he went through the streets he walked with the air of one who has lost everything in the world. Every-

one turned to look at him. The older people with contempt in their faces, not even deigning to speak to him; the children with great love and pity in their eyes, not daring to speak to him.

He abandoned the village hurriedly without looking back. He walked for some time, and then his eyes were attracted by the beautiful scenery that could be seen from where he stood. He stopped, and his trained and profound eyes began to study the landscape.

Unconsciously he opened his box of paints and stretched a canvas upon a frame. He took out his brushes and then his palette, which still had all the colours on it, and began to work feverishly.

The sun was setting, the landscape he was painting was sombre and portrayed all the sorrow of his soul. When he was happy all his pictures were colourful and gay, but now he had lost incentive to paint; he had lost all interest in his art.

He stood up in anger, and pushing the unfinished

picture aside, he hurled the palette from him, and to his great astonishment it described a semicircle in the sky, leaving a trail with all its colours in it standing brightly under the light of the setting sun.

The Master remained motionless, contemplating this extraordinary arch that was growing dimmer as the sun disappeared, and suddenly he started back to the village, running like a madman to tell the people of the wonderful happening.

When he arrived at the village it was dark, and the people looked at him in surprise when they saw him return in that way: yelling and talking about an arch of colours that his palette had painted on the sky.

Soon a group gathered about him, and he began to tell them about what had happened, but they looked at him with wondering eyes and someone said:

"The man is crazy, do not pay attention to him. How is it possible for a palette to paint an arch of colours upon the sky? The man is crazy."

And everyone repeated, "He is crazy," and the sen-

tence went from mouth to mouth, spreading throughout the village.

The Master was desperate. He went madly from one person to another trying to explain.

But everybody turned from him and laughed.

"The Master has returned insane."

And somebody would comment:

"He always showed signs of insanity. Remember how he used to play with the boys as if he were one of them. Imagine a man at his age playing. Who thinks of play in this world after growing up? He always showed signs of insanity." And everybody was convinced that he was insane.

And the person would continue:

"Remember how he used to keep the boys for hours about the fountain, telling them tales about crazy things. I sometimes stood by and listened. He spoke of witches that flew over cornfields at night, and princes that turned into swans. He never spoke seriously, he was always jesting. Indeed, a man must be

insane to speak for hours about things that are not serious."

And then the Master addressed the boys as a last hope, but the boys looked at him with infinite pity and then turned their heads away and cried.

Even his former pals doubted his sanity. This thought made him lose his head, and he began to doubt his own mind. Perhaps at that moment he actually became insane, because his eyes flashed, and he attacked a man who was standing before him laughing.

Several men rushed to the rescue, and one of them fetched a piece of rope, and the Master's hands were tied behind his back, and that night he was placed in a chamber that had bars in the windows and a small heavy door with a little grating in it. The village had no madhouse because nobody had ever been known to go mad there.

In that cell the Master remained for some time. He hardly ate and never spoke. He just lay on his bed, his eyes resting on the ceiling.

And in the meanwhile the dust of many days had accumulated on the beautiful arch of colours which his palette painted upon the sky, and therefore no one could see it.

One day a great lord came to visit the village. He put up at the hosteria where the Master had dwelt, and it was by chance that he discovered the paintings which the Master had left there.

Now, this great lord considered himself a very good art critic, and when he saw the paintings he marvelled at them and exclaimed:

"Why, these pictures are masterful, they are the best I have seen. Who painted them? I want to meet the author immediately."

Whereupon the hostelero answered:

"Unfortunately, your lordship, the author of those pictures is in confinement because he became insane."

"Insane nothing!" cried the lord. "It is more likely that all of you are idiotic. The author of those paint-

ings is a genius. It is often difficult to tell insanity and genius apart."

And everyone repeated the statement of the great lord and began seriously to think that after all perhaps they were all idiotic and the Master was a genius.

The lord insisted:

"I want to be taken immediately to that great artist, for it is my intention to take him with me and present him to the King, who will bestow a decoration upon me for having found him a new genius, seeing that the court is rather short of genius lately."

But when they arrived at the cell they found the Master dead in his usual position, lying on the bed, and his eyes—those marvellous eyes—were now closed and would see no more.

A modest funeral was arranged for the dead Master, and the children carried his body to be buried outside the town in a spot where he had often sat and painted, surrounded by his young pupils.

But as they were carrying the body a storm broke

out, and it began to rain copiously. This rain did not last long, and the sun came out brighter than before.

And then all beheld an extraordinary spectacle: Against the sky, from one hill to another, there was a marvellous arch of many bright colours in parallel stripes. The arch of which the Master had spoken. The rain had washed off the dust that covered it, and now the sun brought out its colours as brightly as the day when the palette traced them upon the sky.

A murmur of admiration rose from the people, and the body of the Master passed under the first rainbow.

★

When the Master woke up the next morning he felt very happy that all had been but a dream. It was a fine day, and he went as usual with his pals to the country to paint. He was cheerful, and the boys found him, if possible, more amusing than ever. They were all delighted with his company.

That evening, when they returned to the village,

THAT EVENING, SEVERAL OLDER PEOPLE WANTED TO LISTEN

there were gathered in the plaza several older people, who also wanted to listen to the Master's tales, and who greeted him with friendly and expectant smiles.

The Master reclined on the edge of the fountain. His eyes sparkled with strange fascination and added to his usual expression of wisdom a slight touch of mockery.

"To-night," he said, "I have a new story for you. It is called 'The Rainbow.' "

He sprinkled some water over the youthful heads about him, and the moon rose high.

The Master began:

"Once upon a time . . ."

TWILIGHT

THE *campesinos* of Andalusia believe, among other things, that there is somewhere in Spain a strange garden where neither day nor night exists. Whether it is under the light of dawn or under that of sunset that this garden is seen is not known. They call it the Garden of Twilight.

One evening in Seville a boy heard this from some

friends who were talking with his father in the patio of his house.

All that evening he pondered over what he had heard and consequently became very curious to see that garden. He went to bed but was unable to sleep, thinking of it, and he decided to start out early the next day and walk all over Spain until he should find this most extraordinary place where there was neither day nor night.

Just before daybreak he got up, dressed quietly, and went into his father's library. From a folder he selected a map of Spain and studied it carefully, looking at all the provinces and little dots that represented the towns.

The provinces in the map had different colours, and the boy picked as the most suited for his purpose those that were pink as if they were always under the light of dawn, and those that were yellow which seemed to be eternally under the light of sunset.

He folded the map neatly and thrust it into his pocket. Then he took an extra pair of shoes, for he

expected to walk very much. After that he went into the kitchen, took a large piece of bread and a *salchicha,* and having made all his preparations he was off.

The sun was rising when he left the town. He walked through a beautiful road bordered by olive trees. He felt very happy that morning because he was off on a great adventure. The road he had selected was not a very frequented one, and therefore he walked without meeting a single person. It was noontime when he discovered an old man standing by the roadside.

He decided to approach him, and lifting his *boina* he said:

"Señor, would you be kind enough to tell me if I am going in the right direction for the Garden of Twilight?"

The man seemed to be as old as the world. He was bent, and his face was so wrinkled that there did not seem to be a place left in it, no matter how small, where there was not a tiny wrinkle.

"Other boys have come this way and asked me the

same question," he answered, "but there is no particular road to that garden. Only the chosen ones will find it. I saw it once, but I could not point the way to it. However," he went on, "I could tell you the story of that garden and how it came to pass that it is always twilight there."

"I would like to hear that story, señor."

"Well, then, *chico,* sit here by me and I will tell you this story that will save you many steps."

The boy obeyed gladly, for he was already quite tired and hungry. He took out his lunch and offered half of it to the old man.

But the old man smiled, showing his toothless gums. "I could not eat that food, chico; you go ahead and eat while I tell you the story."

And while the boy ate, the old man said:

★

Once that garden was like all other gardens, only much more beautiful. There were day and night in it,

like everywhere else. This was very long ago. I was about your age then.

And the boy thought this must have been very long ago.

At that time there was a great, powerful lady. She swept the earth in her daily trip and brought to men happiness, energy, and labour. She brought to them eternal hope and realization. She covered the earth with her infinite cloak of light, and her gown had all the colours of nature adorned with all the flowers and perfumed with all the scents of the world.

This lady was beautiful and very kind. She treated all countries and all men with unchangeable equity. All days were alike then; all days were beautiful. She dwelt the same amount of time in every spot, she brought to men the same desire of industry, she brought to all the fruit of labour and cheer and contentment to all mankind. This was the Lady of Day.

There was also a great powerful lord. He always descended upon the world with night. His great dark

THIS WAS THE LADY OF DAY

cloak with which he wrapped the earth was covered with infinite diamond stars. He brought rest and peace to men, he brought them quietness and relief, and he also brought them dreams. During their sleep he told them marvellous tales of other lands. He fulfilled in their imagination all their longings of the day.

Like the Lady of Day, this lord was handsome and very, very kind. All men and countries were the same to him. All nights were alike then, all nights were wonderful. He stayed the same amount of time in every place, he brought the same drowsy feeling to all people, he brought to all the same well-earned rest. He carried all mankind in his dreams to a different world of extraordinary phantasy, and everywhere he brought infinite silence. This was the Lord of Night.

But this lord and lady were not happy themselves. They were greatly in love with each other, but it was their fate never to be together. They always had to be separated by the same distance. They always had to be on opposite sides of the earth.

They both had seen the garden and both had loved it. The garden was splendidly beautiful by day. It was mysteriously charming by night. This garden had also a great echo, and the Lord of Night always left his messages with the echo for the Lady of Day, and the echo repeated them to her when she arrived, and the Lady of Day also left her messages for the Lord of Night in the same manner.

And for this reason both lovers always spent more time in that garden, and night and day were always longer there.

But as time passed the lord and lady were growing sadder, and they could not bear their separation. One night the lord was so desperate and felt so wretched that he cried bitterly, complaining of his misfortune, and that night the first storm came upon the earth, and all were restless and no one slept well. Some had nightmares.

When he arrived at the garden he demanded from the echo:

"O echo, tell me what message did the Lady of Day leave for me?"

And the echo answered:

"She said that it is not for both of you ever to be together. That her sorrow is as great as yours, but that she does not attempt to change destiny. That it is your duty to lull men to sleep and keep watch upon their rest, as it is her duty to encourage men to toil and keep watch upon them. That you must never attempt to unite yourself to her, because that moment will be the end of both."

But the lord was too desperate to heed the advice and he exclaimed:

"Be it as it may, I would rather die than continue this life of eternal suffering. To-morrow night I shall wait here for her."

And he proceeded on his well-known journey, flying in the direction of the west.

The next day the lady was worried and felt very unhappy, and the day was gloomy, and the people,

not having rested well the night before, were lazy and did not feel like working. They wasted the time. Some were ill-tempered and quarrelled, and all experienced the first bad day.

That night, as the lord came on his last journey, the stars shone brighter than ever in his immense cloak, still swayed by the winds of the Andes. In his nostrils still dwelt the scents from the plants and spices of the Orient. His eyes were blacker with the darkness of the Indian jungles. In his ears was still the roar of the lions of the Atlas.

He left his cloak hanging from the stars and descended slowly into the garden.

That was a night of great suspense and mystery. Fearful shadows seemed to creep all over the earth. There was restlessness in the atmosphere, and one could hear the stealthy steps of time go by, for that was also a night of great silence.

The lord sat there all night, his head bowed, absorbed in deep thought, and as the night passed him

by the receding shadows bade him farewell sadly, and each shadow left a tear of dew upon the garden.

Suddenly there was a light on the horizon, and the Lord of Night rose and faced it. The light increased, and the stars upon his breast faded.

The Lady of Day was approaching. She was coming to bring him love and death. She rushed ahead of the day, but the moment she entered the last shadows of night, life abandoned her and the lord held in his arms only her soul.

The sun rose high like an almighty king, and one of its rays struck the Lord of Night in the heart as an arrow of death.

Since then their souls dwell in that garden, and from that union of light and darkness came twilight.

Also, since then, days and nights are sometimes good and sometimes bad; people sometimes work and sometimes waste their time; sometimes they have good dreams and sometimes nightmares. For the lord and lady are no longer there to keep watch day and night.

★

When the old man had finished, the boy stood up and said:

"*Gracias,* señor. I have enjoyed your tale. And now I will be on my way to find that garden."

But the old man stopped him and said:

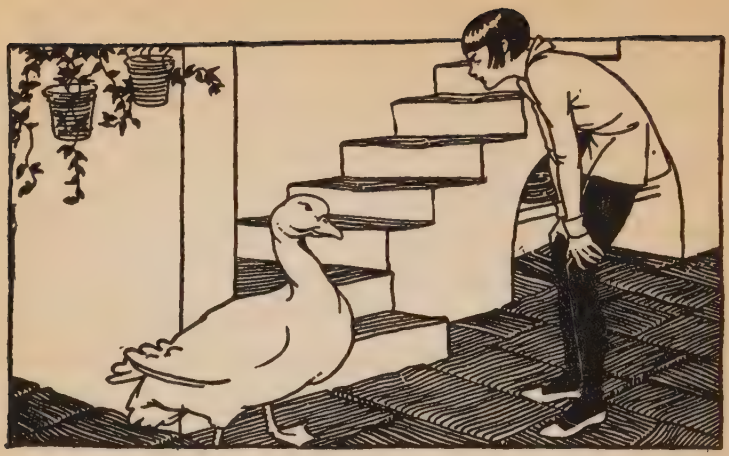
"Wait, chico. That tale is a legend, the garden is a symbol, and it is not to be found by looking for it, but by waiting for it. It comes to visit us, to bring us romance and peace, but it is for the chosen ones to recognize it, for those at your age which is the dawn of life when you are looking for romance; for those at my age which is the sunset of life when we are looking for peace."

The boy understood and started back to Seville. When he was nearing the town the sun was low. He saw the beautiful vegas, the soft velvety lines of the hills, first green, then pink, then blue. He beheld the first houses of the city, some fresh and modern, white with red roofs, some old Moorish structures.

In front of a house there was a young man singing,

playing a guitar, and looking up at a window full of geraniums.

The boy saw all this, and it meant to him something it had never meant before. His heart jumped with joy, and he felt very happy, for he had discovered and recognized the garden of twilight in all this beauty, in all this peace, in this most wonderful country of Spain that lives for romance, between the darkness of the past and the light of the future.



THE CLOVER

A cojer el trebol,
el trebol, el trebol.
A cojer el trebol
la Noche de San Juan.

It is the night of San Juan in Spain! The night of bonfires and clover hunters. One can hear this song repeated by young and old as they go about merrily

in search of the four-leaf clover; for it is an old belief that he who finds this precious plant on this night of nights will meet with abundant good luck for the rest of that year, or even for the rest of his life.

One must go back into Spanish history to find the romance that constitutes the foundation of this belief.

It was near the end of the Moorish domination in Spain. The Moors had been driven back by the Spanish armies, but still were strong in Granada, the last stronghold of their empire.

At this turn of things the great Musa-ben-Nessayr, the Moorish leader, had succeeded in capturing a young Spanish lady of the highest nobility whom he held a captive in La Alhambra. He had also sent a message to the Spaniards warning them not to attempt to rescue the lady by violence, for should the Spanish armies advance upon Granada he would not hesitate to kill her.

This naturally hampered the Spanish armies, which

did not dare risk, by an attack, the life of a person of such high rank. Things therefore remained at a standstill, and the Moors could not be definitely driven from Spain.

It was necessary to employ other means in order to rescue the young lady, and several young noblemen had volunteered and gone to Granada disguised as Moors, and some had even entered La Alhambra, but in the end they had always been discovered and immediately put to death.

★

Juanin, a diminutive for Juan, because he was a very small boy, lived on a very large farm that his father owned, in the vicinity of Salamanca. He was indeed the luckiest boy in existence. He always won at every game he played; he invariably received the best marks in school. In short, he was always successful in anything he attempted.

Of all the animals on the farm Juanin was particu-

larly fond of a great big goose, who warmly reciprocated this fondness. Juanin had named the goose after himself, but as the goose was so big he called him Juanon.

Juanin and Juanon were the best friends in the world. They shared the same food and went everywhere together. This was most convenient for Juanin, for, as he was light of weight, he could sit on Juanon's back, and Juanon would fly and carry him wherever he pleased. This will serve as another instance of Juanin's good luck.

One day, as Juanin was patting him, Juanon looked up at his friend and said:

"Do you know, Juanin, in spite of your unerring good luck and aside from the fact that you ride on my back a bit too often, I think you are a fine chap?"

"Do you think so, Juanon?"

"Yes, Juanin."

"I am glad you do, and I also think that despite your looks you are an excellent individual, Juanon."

"Thank you, Juanin." And Juanon placed a small bag in Juanin's hand.

"That bag," he said, "contains clover seeds. I have made a profound study of such plants and discovered their mysterious properties. The seeds in that bag have been carefully selected out of many thousands of seeds. They are very rare and hard to find. Keep them and don't lose them, for you may find them very useful some day."

That afternoon Juanin learned for the first time about the young Spanish noble lady who was held a prisoner in La Alhambra by the fearful Musa-ben-Nessayr.

★

And so it came to pass that Juanin and Juanon decided to go to Granada to deliver the young lady from the Moors.

One fine day that was a bit chillier than the preceding ones, and right on the tracks of the first mi-

grating swallows, they started southward, Juanon flying at top speed, and Juanin on his back, holding on to his friend's neck.

They flew for a long time: over cities, villages, and provinces; over mountains, over valleys, and over rivers. Sometimes they rose very high, and everything seemed so small that Juanin felt very happy seeing everybody smaller than himself, a feeling that he seldom enjoyed when he was on the same level with other people. Sometimes they travelled above the clouds and couldn't see or hear anything. Juanin's clothes would be wet, and drops of water would roll off Juanon's feathers, and then Juanin would protest, and Juanon would swoop down; and then for some time they would pass very low over villages, and the people would look up and hail them, which of course made them feel very important. Once Juanin got so excited trying to talk to people in a hurry that he lost his balance and nearly slipped off. Juanon told him to behave himself.

When they passed over Sierra Morena and the river Guadalquivir it was quite dark. Soon after, they left the Spanish territory and entered the Moorish dominions. That night they arrived at Granada.

Juanon flew very silently, and as it was dark they made their way unnoticed into La Alhambra.

Even at night La Alhambra shone with incomparable beauty, and the two friends perched themselves on a wall shaded by trees, and from that hiding place contemplated the delicate group of buildings.

At that moment the full moon appeared and, as if by enchantment, the whole place was illuminated and all its marvels stood out under the pale light. The aroma of infinite flowers filled the air of those gardens; the fine structure of the Alcazar was like silver filigree against the deep blue sky; and the fountains of the Generalife sang the most exquisite melody. La Alhambra lay asleep under the moonlight.

Juanin and Juanon stood motionless, contemplating all this beauty, and at last Juanon struck his friend with

a wing and suggested that they investigate to find where the princess was kept.

They advanced along the wall on which they stood and then suddenly heard the sound of voices.

Two Moorish soldiers were holding a conversation. Juanin did not understand their language, but Juanon knew it to perfection. He listened for a while, and when the two soldiers departed Juanon turned to his friend:

"They were saying that to-morrow the ceremony will take place by which the young lady will join the Harem of Musa-ben-Nessayr. Incidentally, I have also found out from them where the fair lady is being kept. Get on my back, Juanin, and let's go."

Juanin did so in such a hurry that they nearly fell off the wall, and immediately Juanon headed for one of the buildings, and after a little hesitation landed on a window.

The room inside was lighted by a single lamp and was beautifully furnished in the Moorish style. The

walls were very colourful, and the tile work and Arabic inscriptions gleamed in the dim light. In a corner, upon a divan, the girl lay asleep, her hair streaming down to the cushions on the floor.

Juanin entered the room and advanced on tiptoe toward her, followed by Juanon. Both bent over the divan and looked at her for a long time. Neither of them was a great judge of beauty, but they knew she was the most beautiful human being they had seen.

Again Juanon touched his friend with a wing:

"Shall I leave you?"

"Don't be silly." And Juanin blushed to his hair because his friend had discovered his sentiments.

At that moment the young lady woke up, and upon seeing these two strange figures bending over her she let out a scream that rang clearly in the silence of the night.

Juanin put a finger to his mouth, and Juanon flapped his wings.

"Be silent," they exclaimed. "We are friends that have come to rescue you." But the cry had already been

heard, and steps and voices began to sound outside the window.

"Who is there?" a voice called out.

"Someone is in the girl's room," several voices exclaimed.

And presently the noise of steps was heard in the corridor that led to the room where they were.

"Hurry!" cried Juanin. "Let's get on my friend's back and fly away before they get us."

But Juanon hung his head gloomily.

"I can't carry both of you," he said. "It would be too much weight, and I wouldn't be able to fly."

At that moment someone pounded on the door.

"Then carry her," exclaimed Juanin, and he helped the girl onto his friend's back. "Carry her to safety."

"But I can't leave you," objected Juanon; "you are my best friend."

"Carry her, Juanon, don't mind me, she is more important, I do not count. Fly away before it is too late."

Juanon gave his friend a sad look, and as he flew through the window with his precious burden the door was flung open, framing the figure of the great Musa-ben-Nessayr, his eyes like two burning coals, and in his hand a naked scimitar that flashed in a sinister way.

"Who are you?" he thundered to Juanin. And then, seeing the empty divan: "Where is the lady?"

Juanin considered it quite unnecessary to answer the first question, and he limited himself to waving at the window with a great gesture. The flying group, now in the distance, was nothing but a bright spot against the Andalusian sky.

"Seize him!" cried Musa-ben-Nessayr to his soldiers, and he rushed to the window brandishing the scimitar. But when he looked out he realized that it was too late, and he remained there gazing at the sky toward the north, where the lady had flown and where his enemies were.

When he turned about his eyes were veiled with tears and his whole countenance bespoke so much grief that even Juanin felt a little sad for him.

The heavy scent of many flowers came through the window, and Musa-ben-Nessayr spoke now with a soft voice:

"No flower ever blossomed in a garden as beautiful as the love that blossomed in my soul for her.

"The golden roofs of our holy mosques never shone as brightly and never concealed so much purity as her golden hair."

The water from the fountains sang in the distance an accompaniment to his words.

"All the fountains in La Alhambra were not as harmonious as her voice.

"The snow upon the sierras was not as white as her fair face."

He was leaning against the window and his voice was carried by the cool night breeze.

"Her mouth was beckoning and distant as a remote oasis.

"And the stars upon the desert were not as bright or unattainable as her eyes.

"And you," he said to Juanin with rage, "you have sent her away from me—you whom I could crush like a worm. But you shall pay to-morrow at noon, you shall die by torture." And he flew out of the door like a hurricane.

Juanin tried to kick him as he went by, but his legs were too short, and he missed by a yard. He contented himself with crying:

"I may be a worm, but this is one time that I fooled a bird like you." Juanin resented any remarks about his size, and now he did not feel sorry for the big Moor any more.

Juanin was led or rather carried by the soldiers down to the gardens. They took him to a desolate spot where a wall stood with several chains attached to it. There was no grass near that wall where the feet of many prisoners had trampled. The soldiers fastened one of the chains to Juanin's ankle and then went away, leaving two sentinels sitting not very far from Juanin.

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JUANIN TRIED TO KICK HIM

When he was alone he gave way to his sorrow and began to mourn his ill fate:

"That my good luck should fail me when I needed it most; when I was performing the best deed in my life," he cried.

Then he remembered and took from his pocket the bag of clover seeds that Juanon had given him. He opened it and looked at the seeds inside with scorn.

"When my good friend gave you to me he said some day I might need you. Indeed I need something now, but of what help can you be to me at this moment?" And he let the contents of the bag fall to the arid ground before him and then cried bitterly over them for the rest of the night.

Just before dawn Juanin went to sleep and dreamed that he was a great lord married to the beautiful noble lady, and that Musa-ben-Nessayr was his slave. In his dream Juanin kicked the Moor all the time and never missed.

In the morning, when the soldiers decided to wake

Juanin up, they discovered on the ground before him a bed of clover. They were sure it was not there the day before, and when they looked again more closely they discovered that every clover had four leaves.

The news of this extraordinary happening spread quickly, and soon there was a large crowd assembled in front of Juanin, looking at the clover. The noise they made woke Juanin up just at the moment he was about to give the Moor another kick, which annoyed him considerably, and when he saw so many people he thought his last hour had come.

At that moment Musa-ben-Nessayr arrived, and everyone made way for him. He stopped in front of the bed of clover and looked at it in astonishment, then his expression turned into one of awe and he exclaimed:

"Down on your faces! Everybody down on your faces! For the chosen one of Allah has come to visit us. The prophecies say that he would come and we should think him an enemy, but that we should recog-

nize him because wheresoever he should spend the night strange plants would blossom. And indeed the prophecies have been fulfilled, for I never saw before a clover that had four leaves."

Saying this, he prostrated himself in front of Juanin, who did not know what it was all about, and to his great surprise found himself unchained and free.

Then Musa-ben-Nessayr rose and told Juanin that everything in sight, and more, was at his disposal; that he had but to express a wish and it would be immediately complied with.

Juanin, who was by no means stupid, had by this time grasped the situation perfectly and played his part in a masterful way. He ordered the best horse in the stables and did not ask for anything else, because he was in a great hurry to get away. However, he picked all the clovers and pocketed them carefully.

And so it happened that, instead of being killed that morning, Juanin was triumphantly escorted to the very gates of Granada by the Moors, and when

Musa-ben-Nessayr bade him farewell, Juanin took a clover out and presented it to him, saying that it would bring him luck. Juanin did not mention whether good or bad.

As a matter of fact it was bad luck that the clover brought the Moorish leader. Juanon, who had placed the noble lady in safety, had already flown over the Spanish camps, arousing the armies which, with no reason now for holding back, fell upon Granada and took possession of it.

Of course Juanin came to regard the four-leaved clover as a symbol of the best fortune; and, although historians do not mention the fact, such was the great part that this most uncommon plant and Juanin, as well as Juanon, played in the conquest of Granada and in the complete banishment of the Moors from Spanish soil.

For reasons unknown to this day Juanin did not marry the beautiful lady; instead, he went back to his farm, taking all the clover with him, and they

brought him so much good luck that he remained a bachelor and lived the happiest life to a very old age.

★

Once, on the day of San Juan, his saint's day, Juanin said to Juanon:

"I want to spread good fortune over the world. I have had as much good luck as anyone could wish. Now I am very old and need it no more, and I propose that to-night we fly high and then scatter these clovers all over the world so that all will have an even chance at them, so that they will have to seek in order to find good fortune."

"Seek and thou shalt find," commented Juanon. "But it means that at my old age I must carry you again on my back."

"It shall be the last time, Juanon."

And that night the two friends flew high, very high, higher than they had ever flown before, and then scattered the four-leaf clovers all over the world.

That was the night of San Juan, and since then, on this night of nights, young and old go about in quest of the four-leaf clover merrily singing:

"A cojer el trebol,
el trebol, el trebol.
A cojer el trebol
la Noche de San Juan."

SAILS

ON THE east coast of Spain, by the Mediterranean Sea, are scattered several colonies of fishermen. It is said that once, in the very early days of history, these colonies were united into a great one which dominated that whole coast from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Gulf of the Lion.

This primitive republic, if one may use that denomination, lived on its trade and had its main em-

porium somewhere on the shores between Valencia and Catalonia.

In those days sails were not known, and navigation was done purely by the force of the arm. It must have been beautiful to see those primitive men going over the sea in their great boats, their shiny, athletic, swarthy bodies bending over the oars, their muscles tense, their gaze attentively piercing the foamy sea or dreamily lost in the remote horizon.

It was the intention of the leaders in this old republic to extend their nation so as to cover all the shores of the Mediterranean, which was the only sea known to them, to communicate with yonder colonies of fishermen and form a great league of the sea in which all seamen whose countries gave onto the same waters would aid and help each other; for as they said, the sea was a great mutual friend as it provided food and enjoyment for all, but could very well become a common enemy if it threatened to destroy everything with its storms.

And it was in those days when the beautiful thought of making a nation of the sea dawned on those primitive minds, it was in those days on a glorious Sunday morning, that a little child was found on the shore between Valencia and Catalonia.

No one could understand how the child came to be found alive on the shore, as if the sea had washed it in, and the old men of the colony stated that a child that came into the world in that extraordinary fashion and on a Sunday morning was undoubtedly sent by Providence and had been born to perform great deeds.

The child, who was a boy, was joyously adopted by the colony and named Salvador.

He grew among that people, loved by all. As a boy he played with the other children of his age, and one day, when he was strong enough to hold an oar, he went to sea with the men to fish.

In this way he developed into a handsome youth: his square shoulders broadened by rowing, his muscles

supple, his body tall and slender, his olive complexion darkened by the sea breezes, his black eyes more profound, his mind alert, and his heart brave.

Everyone said he was becoming a worthy seaman and that some day he would be very useful to his people, but the girls said that he was already the handsomest man in the colony, and some day, they hoped, he would make a wonderful lover.

As a matter of fact, the girls' hopes seemed to lack foundation, for he was never particularly attracted to any of them. His mind appeared to be occupied with other things, which might not be as important but which undoubtedly interested him more.

Often as he returned from a day's fishing the girls on the beach would assume strange poses which they thought becoming and which were meant to attract his attention, but he usually passed them by as if in a daze, absolutely oblivious of their smiles and blushes.

Once, when he was lying upon the sand, his eyes wandering in the distance, a companion approached him with these words:

HE WAS LYING UPON THE SAND

"Thinking of some girl, Salvador?"

Salvador did not answer, he had not even noticed the presence of the other.

His friend repeated the question, which this time sounded quite unnecessary, but Salvador shook his head:

"My heart is not in the land, it is in the sea, beyond the horizon, wondering what is there."

"Oh, I thought you were thinking of something important."

"I am," said Salvador, fixing his interlocutor with a look. "Do you know? I am in love."

"Oh, yes?" exclaimed his friend, bending closer as if to listen to an interesting confession. "With whom?"

"With adventure," Salvador informed him very seriously.

His companion looked terribly disappointed and went away, leaving Salvador lying upon the sand, his eyes wandering in the distance.

★

One day Salvador was strolling along the beach when he beheld a great assembly of people, in the centre of which there was the oldest man in the colony. He was addressing the people from a little promontory of sand.

The old man was saying:

"All the preparations have been made. The people on yonder shores beyond the horizon await us. They are waiting for us to bring them the banner of the sea that will make all seamen brothers, for the sea is truly the fatherland of all those who dwell on its shores. The flag is ready now. All the maidens in our colony have taken a hand at weaving it. The flag is ready now: behold it!"

And two young men that were standing by him lifted the flag, fastened to an oar: a great white flag that waved in the air. And then all these men and women who were assembled there fell on their knees and saluted the standard of the sea.

"How beautiful and white it looks against the blue sky and the blue sea," thought Salvador.

The old man went on:

"This banner represents all that our people stand for, all the ideals and sentiments of the sea nation. One of our men shall be selected by vote to be entrusted with the mission of carrying the flag across the seas to the other countries and other peoples. Choose your man!"

"Salvador!" cried a thousand voices in unison, and the name rang out clearly on that bright day upon the shore.

Salvador, who had been absorbed in the contemplation of the flag, woke up on hearing his name returning in the echo of the sea as if the waves were calling him. Everyone turned around to where he stood and then made way for him.

Although, because of his dreamy disposition, Salvador had scarcely been aware that all this was going on, he did not seem in the least surprised and walked

calmly among the cheering throngs toward the old man, as if all this were the most natural thing in the world.

The old man caressed Salvador with his smiling eyes and said:

"Salvador, your people have chosen you, and I think they have chosen well. Because of your courage, your seamanship and your great character, you deserve to be entrusted with this mission as the best representative of our people." And saying thus, the old man embraced Salvador and then placed the flag in his hands.

Salvador, who had found himself suddenly involved in this great situation, showed no sign of surprise. He accepted the flag in the same natural way in which he did everything in life and held it up for his people.

When the cheers subsided, the old man continued:

"You will select a group of men to accompany you on this expedition and will set out, carrying the flag with you, and will not return until you have visited every people on the shores of the Mediterranean and

shown them our flag, their flag, and told them that we are all brothers, that we all belong to the same great nation, the Nation of the Sea."

★

The next day the whole colony was gathered on the beach. Salvador marched down the beach, carrying the flag, followed by the hundred best men, who held their oars over their shoulders. He entered a boat much larger than the others, which had been specially built for this occasion. He stood in the prow. Then he lowered the flag into the waves and, lifting it again, he kissed it.

An immense roar came from the beach.

Salvador gave the order. All the oars fell simultaneously and then went back and forth with absolute uniformity at the sides of the moving boat, as though they were the feet of a huge centipede.

When they started the day was clear, but in the afternoon clouds began to gather on the horizon, and the wind blew stronger.

Salvador had taken his place at the stern and was facing his men, directing them, but now he looked at the sea and frowned. The men were not in the habit of wandering about the sea so far from land. The colour of the sea had changed; the waves were now thick and rocked the boat in a threatening way.

Salvador stood there watching the men move back and forth in unison as if pushing away some invisible foe, and he put one hand upon the flag that lay beside him and held it tightly. The sea was turning on them.

By the time night came a tremendous storm had broken loose. The wind blew with rage; the waves reached a fearful height, tossed the boat furiously, lifted it with irresistible force, and then precipitated it into a black abyss. That sea that in the morning had appeared so blue and peaceful was now a black monster rising to crush and swallow everything on its surface.

The men held on to their oars with all their might, straining their muscles, their faces pale with fear.

For some time their efforts had been vain against the forces of nature, and the sea had carried them at a tremendous speed farther and farther away from the land.

There they were, abandoned, away from everything, in the midst of that immense loneliness and darkness, at the mercy of an infuriated sea.

As the night wore on the storm seemed to increase. The waves became still larger, like mountains. Many of the oars had been broken, and the boat was shipping more and more water.

All night long these brave seamen struggled desperately. Not a single one of them ever uttered a word to express the fear which their faces betrayed. Those whose oars had been torn from them or broken in that hopeless fight against the sea were now trying to bale out the water that was filling the boat.

By the light of each flash of lightning one could see the eyes of these men, who were facing death, fixed upon Salvador, who stood in the stern impassively, as

if he did not notice the water that covered his body, the wind that blew his hair, the waves, any one of which might mean the end, the blackness of the night that hid that scene of horror and in which death was lying in wait. His mind seemed to be far away, as if all that had nothing to do with him. At last the adventure he had so long wished for had arrived—perhaps to destroy him.

And then he looked at his men again and beheld them panting with fatigue, their eyes fixed upon him, the broken oars in their clenched fists, hope completely banished from their countenances.

He knew that the end had come, that these men could not fight any more, and then he addressed them with a voice that overpowered even the roar of the sea.

"All hope is gone now, the end has arrived, and we must die like brave seamen. Let us sing together as we sink, let us lift the flag of the sea that will soon take us to its bosom and lull us into eternal sleep."

HE LOOKED AT HIS MEN

And two men staggered forth and helped Salvador to fasten the flag to the only two oars that were left, so that it would stand, and the flag rose like the livid spirit of the sea. Then all these men sang together, their tired voices drowned in the storm, and when Salvador saw them all so bravely resigned to their fate he felt infinitely sad for them and tasted on his lips the salt of his tears mixed with the salt of the sea.

But as the men sang an extraordinary thing was happening: the flag was growing; it was growing with the oars, and the hurricane could not blow it away. And then the storm subsided, the wind ceased, the sea became peaceful, and a mild breeze blew on the flag and carried the boat forward.

The men fell back in amazement, and the song died on their lips. They remained silent for a long time, and then a great cheer went up, and they began to sing with enthusiasm, with renewed strength. Only Salvador remained quiet, taking it all as the most natural thing in the world. He only lifted his head up with his eyes closed and took a deep breath.

The first sail had been born like a flower of the sea.

★

The sun was rising upon a beautiful sea, running through all the gamut of colours like a great gem sprinkled with gold. They were approaching one of the Balearic Islands, gliding swiftly over the waves, as if the boat did not touch the water, almost flying, their improvised sail cast to the wind like the wings of a bird.

When they neared the island they saw large crowds of people on the beach, and as they landed several men came into the water with ropes and pulled the boat in.

When Salvador and his men stepped on the beach a man who by his appearance seemed to be the leader there approached Salvador and, after bowing to him, said:

"Welcome, our king. We have waited for you all this time without losing hope, for the wise men said that you would return to us on this very day."

And everybody on the beach shouted and cheered for a long time, showing signs of great happiness.

The companions of Salvador were now really astonished, chancing on a new surprise before they had recovered from the previous one, but Salvador received the news without the slightest sign of perplexity. The only thing that actually nonplussed him, although he did not show it, was that these people who apparently had got along so well without a king should be so happy to have one suddenly thrown upon them by the sea.

"Come, my king," the leader continued, "your palace awaits you. Nothing has been touched in there, and it remains just as your father left it. Your companions shall be made comfortable and honoured in the way due to the escort of a king."

But Salvador pointed to the sail on his boat and said:

"I have just come to bring you the flag of the sea, of this great nation of the sea to which all of those

who live on its shores belong. I bring you a message of love from your brothers beyond the horizon, and, if I may express a wish as your king, I want you all to build ships equipped with sails, the flag of the sea, and follow me to other shores to which I have promised to carry the same flag and the same message. I shall remain with you until the ships are built, and then we shall set off again with some of your people following me."

And then the people, who had remained silent during this speech, gave way to their enthusiasm and carried Salvador and his companions on their shoulders to the palace: an imposing structure that stood on a high hill.

That night a great feast was staged for the newly arrived king. The choicest foods of the land were served to him and his companions, on golden platters carried by beautiful maidens. It was an excellent and abundant dinner which put to a test the devastating appetite of these hardened seamen.

After that it is said that there were native songs and dances which delighted the eyes and ears of those men who were used to the monotony of the sea.

When all the others had retired and the King and the leader were left alone, Salvador addressed the leader to ask him how it happened that he was their king and had been found on the shores between Valencia and Catalonia.

And the leader began his story thus:

"Your father, the former king of this people, whose memory we all respect and cherish here, was always very fond of the sea. His engaging and unassuming character had won him the love of all his subjects. He spent most of his life with the fishermen, going down to the sea with them, sharing their life.

"One of the fishermen had a daughter a little younger than your father. She and your father had known each other since they were children, but had never regarded their mutual affection as anything but friendly love.

"Once, however, as your father was returning to the palace making merry with some of the young fishermen that he was taking to dinner with him, as was his wont, he saw the girl weaving some nets, he saw her against the sunset, against the sky and the sea tinted with all colours. Indeed, the scenery must have enhanced her charms, for it is known that sunsets in the Balearic Islands are the most beautiful in the world. Your father realized that he loved her and decided to make her his wife.

"But as things in life seldom run as smoothly as we should like them to, there was a lady in your father's court who was greatly enamoured of him. When she learned of your father's intention to marry the fisherman's daughter she was possessed with such an intense jealousy that she resorted to every trick imaginable in order to prevent the marriage.

"Your father, however, was not easily deterred from his intentions, and therefore the wedding took place quietly one afternoon, with the usual ritual which is

observed here: the bride and groom walking arm in arm into the sea until they float, the belief being that if such marriage is not right the couple will sink.

"The marriage must have been right, because the couple floated beautifully, and your father, who felt very merry, began to splash water all around and tease your mother, and then he picked her in his arms and carried her to the beach, laughing, which was a bit informal at that ceremony. But your father never attached much importance to ceremonies.

"Your father and mother lived very happily after that, but their happiness was not to last long, for, unfortunately, one year after, you were born——"

"What do you mean, unfortunately?" interrupted Salvador.

"—and your mother died at childbirth.

"You were consequently left the sole heir to the throne. Your father could never console himself for your mother's death; and he retired and thereafter was seldom seen. But the lady of whom I have spoken

before had not been moved to pity even by the death of her rival, and, knowing that you were the only heir, she decided to remove you so that no son of the woman she most hated should ever reign.

"For this purpose she came to deal with a witch, and instructed her to steal you one night from your cradle and cast you in the sea. But the witch, who undoubtedly was not as bad as the lady, was moved to pity by your tender age, and instead of drowning you she must have decided to fly over the sea and leave you on the shore at the other side, knowing that you would be found and taken care of, for it is known that most people who live by the sea have kind hearts.

"That is what presumably took place, and that explains how you were found on that shore, as you have already informed me.

"After your disappearance your father was so smitten with sorrow that he did not outlive his wife very long, and one day he went to join her, in a secluded spot by the sea, which both had loved so dearly.

"The wise men insisted that you were alive and that some day you would return, and by some intricate calculations with the stars they came to agree upon marking this day on the calendar as the day of your return. That is the reason why this morning we were all waiting for you at the beach, and it is one more instance which proves that stars never lie."

When the leader had finished the story Salvador stood up and said:

"Now that the mystery surrounding my origin has been cleared up and it no longer puzzles me, let us retire." And he went to a luxuriously furnished chamber, where he slept like a true king.

★

Salvador remained on the island for some time while the ships that were to revolutionize navigation were being built. Every day he went down to inspect the work, which was progressing rapidly. He felt happy and proud when he contemplated these huge craft,

their hulls high and powerful to withstand the onslaughts of the waves, their heavy masts and rigging rising up like a forest of leafless trees, waiting for the sails to blossom in them.

And finally the ships were finished, and one day everybody congregated on the beach.

Salvador was leaving. He had spent a wonderful vacation on that island, loved and honoured by all. Everything was so beautiful and good there, the food, the women, the landscape, that he had a difficult time persuading his men to come away with him.

Salvador was leaving, and everybody felt very sad to part with him. The leader embraced him fondly, and many people kissed his hands.

Salvador was leaving, but not as he had started out, with a small boat hardly capable of fighting against the sea. He was leaving in a great galleon with tall masts on which the sails were folded, followed by a huge escort in other galleons equally large and impressive.

He boarded one of the ships, walked to the prow,

and stood upon the bowsprit. From that position he contemplated the throngs upon the shore. His graceful figure stood out against the sky like that of a mythological demigod, and then he spoke:

"My friends, the hour of my departure has arrived. I must go on with my mission of forming a larger and truer kingdom to which you already belong. I have brought you your real flag, and now I will carry it to other people who will welcome and love it like you."

And at a sign from him all the sails were unfurled, and from the shore a great roar rose as the wind filled them and the galleons moved majestically out to the sea.

★

For a long time Salvador cruised the Mediterranean, always enthusiastically cheered at every shore, always gathering more people and ships with sails, the flag of the sea. It was a true flag indeed, for it helped forward the spirit of the sea instead of hindering its development. And many years passed, and the sea nation

spread more and more to limits undreamed of. Not only other seas, but other oceans and continents were discovered, and the conquering fleet now covered the whole world. It was conquering indeed, as it went by, winning the seamen's hearts.

And so it was that on one glorious Sunday afternoon, many years after he had been found upon the beach a helpless baby, Salvador returned to the shores between Valencia and Catalonia, to his adopted people, a great pioneer, looked upon by all as the King of the Sea.

And the old man of the colony who was standing on the beach surrounded by his people, said, pointing to the horizon:

"Behold the banner of the sea!"

And the people saw between the blue sky and the blue sea the immense fleet covering the horizon; they saw the galleons approaching, their sails inflated by the wind, like clouds of gold in the afternoon glow.

And the old man went on:

"The mission has been fulfilled. Men will some day find other means of navigation, but nothing will ever be as beautiful. Sails will live forever in the hearts of true seamen, as the flag of their common nation. Sails shall forever adorn the horizon of sea memories, they shall always be reflected upon the waters as the true banner of the sea."

THE FEUD

PEPE, a very bright young student, had lately turned his brilliant mind to inventions. He was spending a summer's vacation with his family in the mountains of Aragon.

One day he came up to his uncle's studio. He had just conceived a marvellous idea.

"Uncle," Pepe exclaimed, opening the door of the studio, "I have a new invention I want to communicate to you."

"What is it this time, my boy?"

"Well, it is like this: I have just thought that it would be wonderful to bring up carrier pigeons and parrots together so as to obtain a cross breed that, instead of carrying the message, could speak it. This would do away with the possibility of the pigeon losing the message. What do you think?"

The uncle sat thinking for a while and then said:

"Your invention is absurd, Pepito. It is not practical. If you listen to me I will tell you why." And the uncle rose and took Pepe to a window.

The studio was on the top floor of the house, and vast distances of land could be seen from there.

The uncle pointed to a castle that stood on a mountain to the right.

"Do you know that castle, Pepito?"

"Yes, that is the castle of Count Don Nuño."

The uncle pointed to another castle, which also stood on a mountain to the left.

"Do you know that other castle?"

"Yes, that is the castle of Count Don Pero."

"Very well," said the uncle. "I shall tell you the story of those castles, or rather the story of the people who lived in them, and that will prove to you how absurd and impractical your invention is."

★

During the feudal days, the owners of those castles naturally had a feud. This feud had started years before, in the following manner:

The first Count Don Nuño and Count Don Pero had remained friendly throughout the political struggles of those days. They were more or less neighbours, and treated each other with the courtesy due to one feudal lord from another. They were, incidentally, two ferocious-looking chaps.

Don Nuño, who enjoyed a very healthy appetite, was exceedingly fond of rabbit stew. He was also an inventor, and had devised a trap which could get him more rabbits than anything else he had tried. The trap was as follows:

Over a stone of fair proportions he spread a handkerchief; on this handkerchief he scattered a generous amount of snuff. Now, when the rabbit passed by, his attention was attracted by this strange bundle. With the natural curiosity of such animals the rabbit smelled the snuff. This caused the rabbit to sneeze, with the result that he struck his nose against the stone with force enough to kill him. Don Nuño always used one of his own initialled handkerchiefs in order to identify his prey should any other hunter stir up an argument.

One day Don Nuño left his castle early and set his trap in the woods that lay between the two castles. He retired, expecting to return later and find at least some twelve rabbits lying about his trap.

However, the first one to pass by was not a rabbit but Don Pero himself, who suffered from corns and had been advised to take long walks as a sure cure.

Don Pero did not see the stone and stumbled heavily against it. This caused him an acute pain, and he

danced about on one foot, holding the other for some time. When the pain subsided he bent over to examine the bundle. He was curious; he did more. He bent closer and smelled the snuff. There was a tingling sensation in his nose, and a terrific sneeze followed which shook the woods, with the result that his nose came in contact with the stone with a tremendous force.

Don Pero fell unconscious; only his Herculean constitution saved him from being killed instantaneously. Don Nuño's trap was most efficient.

When Don Pero came to, some time after, he decided to examine the contrivance which had treated him so cruelly. With all sorts of precautions he picked up the handkerchief. He saw on it brown traces of what he recognized as snuff, and then by the initials he concluded that the handkerchief belonged to his neighbour.

Don Pero was now possessed with fury. In those days people were a bit tempestuous in their feelings. Don

Pero longed for revenge, he felt thirsty for the blood of Don Nuño. Consequently he hid himself behind a tree and awaited results.

Don Nuño was returning. As he approached he was whistling "La Paloma." He felt very happy and was anticipating a copious rabbit stew for that night.

Imagine his surprise when he saw that not only were there no rabbits, but that his handkerchief and snuff had disappeared.

He was about to think that it had been blown away by the wind when he was suddenly hit a terrible blow between his ears. He turned about and beheld Don Pero brandishing the branch of a tree.

Don Nuño, who was also a little rash, did not wait for explanations. He picked up the stone which had caused all the trouble and threw it at his enemy. It landed squarely on his neighbour's nose. Decidedly that stone and the nose of Don Pero were bound to collide.

A fearful struggle ensued, with the result that when

the two counts arrived at their respective castles they were hardly recognizable.

This is how the feud started, which was afterward handed down from generation to generation, each one adding more cause for mutual hatred. And it was now the only purpose of the young Count Don Pero and the young Count Don Nuño to exterminate each other.

One dark night, just before the hostilities had been opened for the season between the counts, young Don Nuño left his chambers quietly. He went down to the stables and chose the fastest horse there.

He had devised a plan. He was going to call on an old sorceress who had known his family for a long time. He rode in the night at a breakneck speed and finally arrived at the hut where the old witch lived.

He found her eating sardines—a food of which all witches are very fond.

"Hello, old chap!" exclaimed the witch when he entered. "How is everything at the old castle? I have

THE WITCH WAS EATING SARDINES

not seen any of your family since the night that the first Count Don Nuño came with a black eye to ask me to turn him into a mouse. He never explained his reason, and what is more, never paid me for my services, as he died unexpectedly, having been eaten by a cat. Sit down, have a sardine, and tell me what brings you here."

Young Don Nuño, who had inherited the good appetite of his ancestor and felt a bit empty after the long ride, sat down and accepted the sardine. He ate it and without asking permission helped himself to another: an action that in anyone but a count would have been most censurable, and which caused the witch to look at him crossly.

The Count began:

"Undoubtedly you are aware of the long feud between my family and that of my neighbour Count Don Pero, which has agitated this land for centuries."

"I am," put in the sorceress.

Don Nuño took advantage of this interruption to help himself to another sardine.

The witch scowled.

Don Nuño proceeded:

"The hostilities are about to be opened for the season, and I have come to you for help."

"In what way can I help you, my boy?" asked the sorceress, pushing the plate of sardines away from the Count.

"In this way," said the Count. "I want you to give me the power to change at will into some sort of a bird, so that I can enter Don Pero's castle unnoticed and gather information to lay my plan of attack on him. Will you suggest what is the most suitable kind of a bird for this purpose?"

The witch closed her eyes in order to concentrate and think better. Don Nuño seized the rare opportunity and reached across the table. This time he took two sardines and gulped them down with amazing celerity. Really, this conduct, even in a count, was overleaping all the limits of civility.

The sorceress opened her eyes and said:

"How would a pigeon do? In that disguise you could enter your enemy's castle and leave unnoticed."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Don Nuño with his mouth full. "I like pigeons very much."

"Well," said the witch, reaching for a drawer and producing a piece of parchment, "here is this little rhyme which will turn you into a pigeon every time you recite it. When you want to return to your own self all you have to do is to use the interjection *'Caramba.'* "

The Count grabbed the parchment eagerly, but the witch stopped him.

"Wait a moment, you owe me three *escudos.*"

Don Nuño looked at the witch with very sad eyes. He was short of money. Besides, at this moment he was beginning to be aware of a very unpleasant sensation in his stomach.

"I am out of funds at present. Will you trust me for a month?—and at the end of that time I will have raised the money and paid you." He was in a hurry to

get away now, the pains in his stomach were becoming quite unbearable.

"I once trusted your ancestor, the first Count Don Nuño, and that was three hundred years ago, and I have not been paid yet. I am afraid I will have to make you sign this receipt to protect my interests. Witch business has been rather slow lately."

Don Nuño signed the receipt hastily, his face distorted by pain, and rushed away with the precious parchment. The sardines had disagreed with him.

He had scarcely been gone five minutes when a tapping came at the sorceress's door.

"Come in!" she shouted.

Don Pero entered and without any preamble sat down at the table.

"Well, how are you?" exclaimed the witch. "I have not seen any of your family since the night that your ancestor the first Count Don Pero came with a broken nose to ask me to turn him into a cat. He never explained his purpose, and he never paid me for my ser-

vices because he died from having eaten a poisoned mouse." (This will illustrate the extremes to which people were carried by their grudges in feudal days.) "Sit down and tell me what brings you here," finished the witch, putting the sardines away in a drawer and locking it.

And Don Pero began:

"Undoubtedly you are aware——"

"—yes, of the long feud between your family and that of your neighbour, Count Don Nuño, which has agitated this land for centuries," completed the witch who had an excellent memory.

"I am glad you grasp the situation so perfectly," exclaimed the Count, astonished by her intuition, "because I have come to demand your services."

"What can I do for you?" asked the sorceress, pleased because she saw business was picking up.

"I want you to confer upon me the power of turning into some kind of a bird which will enable me to penetrate into my enemy's castle and prepare my strategy

for an attack. What sort of a bird do you suggest?"

"Well, what about a parrot?"

"Excellent!" cried the Count. "Parrots have always been my pet birds."

The witch reached for the drawer and produced another piece of parchment.

"This parchment has a rhyme written on it. Every time you want to turn into a parrot, all you have to do is to read it."

"And how will I turn into myself again?"

"By using the interjection 'Caramba.' "

The Count took the parchment and rose to depart.

"What about the money?" said the witch.

"What money?"

"You owe me three escudos for this service."

The Count hesitated.

"I forgot to bring any money with me, but I promise to pay you within a month, not before, because I shall probably be very busy now with the preparations for the coming campaign."

"Then sign this receipt. I once trusted your ancestor the first Count Don Pero, and you know what happened. Not that I ever doubted his intentions to pay, but I want this receipt in the eventuality that you should be killed while a parrot, in which sad case I could confiscate some of your property."

Don Pero signed the receipt and departed with the parchment.

That very night Don Nuño decided to put to a test the power of the charm the witch had given him. He locked himself in his chamber and after having drunk a good dose of bicarbonate, because his stomach was still bothering him, he took the parchment from his pocket and read it.

No sooner had he finished reading it than he found himself changed into a pigeon.

"Caramba!" he exclaimed, delighted with the results.

And immediately he found himself again Don Nuño.

He was really beside himself with pleasure and de-

cided to put his newly acquired power into practice without delay.

He changed into a pigeon by reading the rhyme again and flew out of the window in the direction of Don Pero's castle.

Don Pero had a sister called Camila, whose existence was not suspected outside of his castle. She never left the grounds, and most of the time she remained in her chamber. In those days, and for reasons which are tedious to explain, men of the calibre of Don Pero always kept the women of their household under lock and key.

Don Nuño arrived that night at his enemy's castle and, mixing with the other pigeons there, passed unnoticed. After a while he decided to examine the ground and flew about the building several times. One of these times he passed near the window of Camila's chamber, which was open, and landing on the sill he looked inside.

Camila was about to get into bed when she noticed

the beautiful pigeon. She came to the window and began to caress him. Then she took him inside and sat on her bed, showering him with more caresses and sweet words.

"What a darling little pigeon! What does my cunning little dove want? Is the little bird hungry?" (This remark Don Nuño considered a most impolite reference to his appetite.) "Has the poor sweet pigeon gone astray?"

Camila was really a comely woman to look upon, and Don Nuño, who did not suspect her existence, was most pleasantly surprised to be so well received by such a beautiful damsel. He enjoyed the caresses to such a degree that he forgot himself.

"Caramba!" he exclaimed, delighted.

Camila let out a terrible yell. In front of her stood Don Nuño, a perfect stranger, who had suddenly sprung out of a pigeon. Camila fainted on her bed.

The Count realized his mistake too late. He did not know what to do. The cry had been loud enough to

be heard miles away. Then he remembered his parchment and hastily took it out of his pocket and began to read it.

But the rhyme was too long, it had about fifty lines, and as he read he could hear the steps and voices of people coming up to the chamber. Before he finished the door was opened and Don Pero stood in it, followed by some of his soldiers.

Don Nuño only had time to hide the parchment in one of his pockets.

Don Pero, after recovering from the first surprise caused by his enemy's presence in his sister's chamber, exclaimed:

"So you have stooped as low as to enter the chamber of a chaste and defenseless woman and try to attack her, not content with stealing into my castle and nosing around like a common stool pigeon!"

"What you say about a pigeon——" began Don Nuño, piqued, but he could not finish because two soldiers had already seized him, and he was being

dragged up a winding staircase to a cell in the tower.

Once he had been left in the cell and the door locked, Don Nuño did not worry any more. He took out his parchment and read the rhyme calmly. When he had finished he was again a pigeon and flew out of the barred window.

In the meanwhile Don Pero had brought his sister back to her senses by emptying a pail of cold water over her face, and then comforted her with soft words. When she was fully recovered he told her that he had important business on hand and that he would be gone for some time.

The important business he had was to get a little sleep, because he was dreadfully tired after the strenuous night. He therefore went to bed and slept the rest of the night.

Early the next morning he rose and went up to the cell where his enemy was. He looked through a small opening in the door and found Don Nuño looking quite cheerful.

Of course, after visiting his own castle, Don Nuño had flown back before dawn, in order not to arouse any suspicions.

Don Pero addressed him in the crude language used in those days between enemies:

"This is one time I got you, you dog!"

"I will get even with you, you swine!" shouted back Don Nuño in no less rude a manner.

Don Pero laughed out loud, and then went back to his chamber. There he took out the parchment the witch had given him and read it carefully. When he had finished he looked into a mirror and found himself changed into a parrot. Without losing time he flew out of the window in the direction of Don Nuño's castle.

He entered the castle unnoticed, as there were many parrots about, and began to examine the grounds. He looked all around, examining all the entrances to the castle, and then flew back to his own.

Both enemies continued in this way for a month:

Don Nuño carrying messages to his people; Don Pero flying back and forth and laying his plan of attack.

At last one night Don Nuño flew back to his castle with the intention of returning the next day with his army to take his enemy by surprise.

The next morning Don Pero flew to Don Nuño's castle to get the last details to complete his plan of attack.

He entered the palace as usual and landed in the middle of the main court, where Don Nuño's soldiers were polishing their halberds and playing dice.

He walked awhile among them and then heard a voice say:

"See what a funny looking parrot!"

Don Pero looked up and beheld Don Nuño, who by this time turned his back on him to watch some soldiers play.

Don Pero was nonplussed. He thought that Don Nuño would be in the cell dying from hunger. His perplexity was such that he forgot he was a parrot.

"Caramba! How did you get out?"

But he had not finished his sentence when he found himself Don Pero again. He regretted his error too late.

Don Nuño turned around and was startled by the sudden appearance of his enemy, not knowing how he had got there, but recovering himself immediately he had Don Pero arrested and sent to a cell.

When Don Pero found himself alone he knew that there was no time to lose, since his enemy was free, and took the parchment out, and after reading it he flew out of the window toward his castle.

"Caramba!" he said once he arrived, and he was once more the Count Don Pero to the great astonishment of his people, who began to ask him how he managed.

"There is no time to answer questions," he cried to all his soldiers. "Get ready quickly, because we are going to attack Don Nuño's castle."

And so it happened that Don Pero, after having

the doors thrown open, advanced at the head of his soldiers toward his enemy.

At that moment Don Nuño was also leading his soldiers against Don Pero.

They met in the middle of the way, at equal distances from both castles, and a terrible fight began.

They fought all day long, and when the sun was setting there were no more soldiers alive, and the only two that remained were the two counts, fighting to a finish.

But at that moment their attention was attracted by sudden cries. They both turned their heads and beheld the witch, who was coming toward them as fast as her legs would carry her, holding two pieces of paper in her hands.

"Wait, my boys, wait!" she cried. "Hold your swords—you must not die without paying me. The notes you signed are up to-day."

Both counts felt very embarrassed: they had forgotten all about their debt, and for a moment they stood there, not knowing what to say.

At last both of them spoke:

"I have no money yet, but if you will wait——"

The witch did not let them finish: she was livid with fury.

"So you have no money, you swindlers. Well, you will be sorry, because in order to punish you, I will change you into a pigeon and a parrot for the rest of your lives."

And the sorceress made a sign, and Don Pero found himself again a parrot, and Don Nuño discovered that he was a pigeon once more.

The descendants of Don Nuño who had carried so many messages were the carrier pigeons, and the descendants of Don Pero who had talked as a parrot were the parrots as they are to-day repeating everything they hear.

★

"And," continued the uncle, "this will show you how absurd and impractical it would be to try to mix

"WAIT, MY BOYS, WAIT!" SHE CRIED

carrier pigeons with parrots. The feud has been handed down to both families, and they would never get along."

Pepe had to admit that his uncle was right and gave up his invention. His uncle finished:

"This will also teach you, Pepito, not to go about trying to make all sorts of inventions, for as you have seen by this tale there are inventions which prove most disastrous."

THE LEGEND OF THE BEES

THERE are two invasions that have not been recorded in Spanish history. I refer to two peoples that once arrived at opposite sides of the Spanish peninsula, representing two ideals of the highest civilization. Where these people came from is not known; their races have not been definitely ascertained.

One of these peoples arrived at the north and Atlantic coasts of the peninsula and took possession of

the northern part of the country. They stood for physical achievement and material progress. As soon as they were in Spain they began to develop the country under the strict command of their leader. With inexorable discipline they toiled from sunrise to sunset; they worked constantly. The fields were cultivated, perfect roads were built, and the most practical structures erected. There was neither waste of time nor waste of space. All the houses were alike, and were devised so as to provide the greatest amount of necessary room with the least amount of material. There were no decorations or anything superfluous. Everything was done in a scientific way, and everything done answered to a material necessity.

This most virtuous and laborious people coöperated with each other to the utmost; each one helped the other; every individual of that well-organized society had no thought for himself but sacrificed his whole existence to the welfare of the community.

Yet, prosperous as this people seemed to be, in the

soul of each individual there dwelt profound unhappiness. There was something lacking in the life of everyone. They did nothing but toil all day long and then sleep in order to gather strength to work more the next day. And many nights they did not even sleep, but lay awake questioning the purpose of their lives. They knew no pleasures, they had no solace, no recreation, nothing but work and work. What were they aiming at? What were they working for? Where did all this progress lead to if they had no time to enjoy the fruits of their labour?

And the great leader of this country saw his subjects go about their work with sullen faces, without enthusiasm, and he did not know what had come upon them, and as he loved his people greatly, he also felt very unhappy.

The other people to which I have referred drifted into the south and Mediterranean coasts of Spain and settled in the southern part of the country. They upheld everything pertaining to enjoyment, culture, and

things of the spirit. They worshipped the flower as a symbol of the finest in nature. Once in Spain, they had no more use for industry or duty and did nothing except dedicate themselves to their fine arts and their pleasures. They went about enjoying all the good things that marvellous land had to offer, doing nothing to improve, or at least preserve, the good qualities they had found. They painted dazzling pictures, made stunning sculptures, and wrote beautiful poetry inspired by the gay and sunny country. And they lay upon the hills, the fields, and the shores, drinking the excellent wines of Spain, singing, making merry, and contemplating the golden fruits in the orange groves of Valencia against the blue Mediterranean Sea, the deep green shades of the olive fields of Andalusia, and the multicoloured flowers of this wonderful land against the blue Spanish sky.

This aimless people had no regard for anything but their own personal pleasures; they neither helped nor annoyed each other; the community was absolutely

indifferent to the individuals, and they almost lived in a state of anarchy.

But notwithstanding the merry life this people apparently led, fear was creeping into their hearts, and often, as they lay on the hills, the fields and shores, they were not contemplating the beauties of the country but were deeply absorbed in the contemplation of their own souls.

They lived only for the beauty of life; they were wasting their time, consuming their supply of happiness without providing for the future. They did not have the remotest idea of duty or labour; they knew nothing but pleasure and idleness. They were consuming without producing. Now all the good old wines had been drunk and there was nothing but hastily made new wine, because they had not troubled to store a good supply every season. The fruits and flowers, without cultivation, were now scarce and had lost their lusciousness of flavour and brilliancy of colour. And what is worse, they had abused pleasures

THEY LIVED ONLY FOR THE BEAUTY OF LIFE

to such an extent that now nothing could afford them enjoyment. They were heading for utter ruin. In the last hour their artistic achievements would not afford them food or shelter.

And their leader, who had encouraged in them this existence of debauchery, this mad desire for all pleasures and beauties of life, and this profound contempt for everything necessary and practical, saw them now bored, yawning, saw all the good things of the land wasted, and felt very sad for his beloved people.

During this sad state of things, a great prophet came to Spain. There is a Spanish saying that "no one is a prophet in his own land"; but fortunately this one came from some unknown country and therefore all listened to him. He was supposed to speak the truth.

After he had visited the north and the south and both leaders had asked him to read the future of their peoples and find a way to regain their lost happiness, he summoned both countries, saying he would deliver his answer the next day.

The next day was the first of the spring. The prophet ascended the Cerro de los Angeles, which is in the centre of Spain, and stood on the top. Toward the north he saw the marvellous and gloomy structures of the northerns against the clouds, like forsaken and empty beehives. Toward the south he beheld the beautiful and melancholy country where the southerners dwelt, exquisite fruits and flowers blossoming less each season and blossoming in vain. And below and all over Spain he saw millions of people coming from everywhere, looking up at him, their hope hanging on his lips, and he beheld these people like infinite swarms of blind bees gone astray, waiting to sip the honey of truth from the flower of his speech. And this revealed to him a great idea.

The prophet spoke with a powerful voice that was heard in the farthest corners of the peninsula:

"Neither of you is entirely right, and neither of you is entirely wrong. Both of you people from the north and from the south must get together and mix,

for you have a great deal to learn from each other and a great deal to teach to each other.

"Man cannot live only for pleasure, as he cannot live only for work. Man must labour to preserve his pleasures. Man must have pleasures in order to receive encouragement to work. Both things can be done constantly if they are properly mixed: by making toil become play; by making play constructive.

"Spiritual things and material things are equally necessary to man. Necessity and beauty must not be separated but united into goodness, for everything that is truly good is both beautiful and necessary.

"These things have always been understood by men, but their practical application requires a broadness of character which men do not generally possess. Instinct in animals solves such problems as intelligence in men cannot solve.

"Your civilization has carried you too far in opposite directions, and now there is only one solution to your problem, but not as men. I can change you

into a new insect that will unite the good qualities of both peoples, that will toil on the beautiful things of life.

"Future generations will wonder at the wisdom of this family of insects that has been born from the union of two great ideals. I have the power to make this transcendental change once. I shall not be able to turn you back into men. Therefore, decide now, and those of you who want to be thus changed raise your hands. Those who do not want to change will go back to their respective countries and remain the same forever."

There was a long silence, and slowly half the people from the north and from the south raised their hands. From his height the prophet saw all over Spain hands lifted toward the sky, like an appeal, like plants that had suddenly sprouted under the spell of the gathering spring.

And then the prophet made a great sign, and the miracle happened. As he lowered his arm he was a

divine conductor leading the strange harmonious humming of infinite swarms of bees.

And the prophet said:

"From this day on you shall be happy.

"From this day on you shall toil and play likewise.

"From this day on you shall find the necessary in the beautiful.

"From this day on you shall derive your industry from the flowers.

"And the fruit of your labour shall be the sweetest in the world."

THE WITCH OF AMBOTO

NEAR Guernica, a village of the Basque Provinces in Spain, there is a place known by the name of Amboto. On winter nights strange tales are told about this place: tales accompanied by the appetizing bubbling of the *moroquil,* which cooks on the fire surrounded by tired peasants and wondering children.

Slowly as the tales unfold, one can imagine a woman emerging from the pot where the corn boils. She is

ONE CAN IMAGINE A WOMAN EMERGING FROM THE POT

a beautiful woman. Her black hair parted in the middle. Golden rings hang from her ears, and the lower part of her dress is full and red.

★

Very long ago Amboto was the dwelling place of a fearful witch. Every Saturday night at the stroke of twelve this witch would leave Amboto and fly all over the neighbouring villages, clad in seven red petticoats. She would fly over the castle of Arteaga, the villages of Ajanguiz, Guernica, and Luno, and on each cornfield she encountered, she would let one petticoat fall until she had no more petticoats left and she had to hurry back to Amboto before dawn.

This uncalled-for conduct of the witch had disastrous consequences. Every cornfield where a petticoat fell was ruined, and every Sunday morning seven cornfields would be found dried. They would not blossom again for the whole season, and there was general consternation, and seven churches were filled with people praying to be delivered from this most horrible witch.

This continued for some time without anyone, in his fear, attempting any measures to prevent it, until one Sunday morning the whole village of Guernica was aroused, not by the church bells, but by a *pregón.*

This public announcement stated that the *alcalde* of the town had declared war against the witch of Amboto. She was to be killed or chased away from the province, since her persistence in spoiling cornfields had grown to most inconvenient and intolerable proportions.

The *irrintzi,* a war cry which only the natives of the Basque Provinces can give out, shook the air of the countryside throughout the ensuing week. It bounced on the cornfields and reached from hill to hill, from mountain to mountain; shrill and powerful during the day, gloomy and threatening during the night, awakening and summoning the archers all the time to come to the rescue of the peasants, to do away with the fearful witch of Amboto. The great hunt had started.

During seven consecutive Saturdays the brave Basque archers gathered in the mountains and the valleys about bonfires which glowed strangely in the evening. The irrintzi was constantly heard, and from a distance the torches going to and fro seemed like fireflies playing hide and seek among the corn.

But just before twelve o'clock at night the bonfires and the irrintzi died out, the torches disappeared, and the archers lay in wait for the witch, their alert ears and eyes piercing silence and darkness, their bows tense, their sharp arrows pointing to the shadows in the direction of Amboto.

At the stroke of twelve, and as if under the spell of a great conjuration, hundreds of arrows, their bright points shining in the moonlight, went up whistling like skyrockets and then came down, their points still glittering, like a rain of stars.

Seven consecutive Sundays the archers returned disappointed, chagrined, with seven red petticoats and more or less plausible excuses. One night the witch

had flown too high for their arrows to reach her; another night she had flown too swiftly for a good aim, another night was entirely too dark to see her. Some claimed their arrows had hit the mark but apparently without effect. And seven cornfields had been ruined every Saturday night, and, what is worse, the archers who had been in them at the time had withered away with the corn and died.

And the brave archers finally grew afraid, and the peasants grew desperate, and sad days of misery followed for that unhappy province.

At last the alcalde issued another pregon offering the hand of his daughter, then the most beautiful girl in town, to him who should deliver the province from the deadly influence of the witch.

There was a boy in Guernica by the name of Urruchu. For some time everybody, including himself, had agreed that he was the most stupid boy in town. He was proud of this title and had successfully defended it, testing his lack of wits against other boys

from neighbouring villages in the last championship for all-around stupidity.

The day the pregon was issued offering the hand of the alcalde's daughter as a reward Urruchu was in the Plaza surrounded by a group of people who were very much amused by his silly sayings.

When the alcalde himself opened the window to repeat personally the pregon, Urruchu was saying that for a long time he had loved the alcalde's daughter and that he was going to get the witch of Amboto and win this most coveted reward.

Used as everybody was to Urruchu's silly remarks, this last one caused everyone to laugh so much that the alcalde thought they were laughing at him, and as he was not accustomed to be laughed at so loudly, he became quite furious and went back inside, slamming the window.

But Urruchu insisted seriously that he meant what he said, and left the Plaza among general laughter and mockery.

When he was turning the corner he looked back at the alcalde's house and beheld in a window surrounded by ivy a beautiful girl looking in his direction. If she had not been so distant he wouldn't have blamed his imagination for the grateful smile he fancied on her countenance.

For some time Urruchu walked through the streets absorbed in deep thoughts. He walked past the quarter of San Juan Ibarra, where he lived, and finally found himself on the road of Mujica. Never in his life had he thought so much at one stretch. He had not suspected himself capable of thinking at all. Of course, this was a great occasion: he was greatly in love with the daughter of the alcalde and was devising a plan to exterminate the witch of Amboto.

The road through which he was walking was bordered by pine and apple trees, those apples called *anguises,* of which he was so fond. He was not thinking of apples, however, and as a matter of fact had not even noticed them, a circumstance which surprised him

later on, for he had often boasted of being able to smell an anguise apple a mile away. Decidedly he had undergone many changes since love and adventure had come into his life.

He was brought back from his thoughts by a church bell, which proves that his sense of hearing had not been quite as affected by these happenings as his senses of sight or smell. He was now in a desolate spot of the road. At one side, almost hidden behind some pine trees, he saw a house he had never noticed before. It was growing dark, the church bell struck seven times.

Urruchu approached the house cautiously. His curiosity had been aroused by a light behind a window. He came close to the window and looked inside.

In the centre of an empty room stood an old woman bending over a cauldron which gave forth a light, the colour of which Urruchu had never seen before. The old woman was pouring some powder in it which seemed to him like cornflour, and every time she did so the light increased, and finally the whole room was

illuminated. She was speaking in a low, rich voice.

Suddenly a figure emerged from the cauldron and then stood back of it. It was a beautiful woman, her hair was black, she wore golden earrings and was clad in seven red petticoats.

"I am the witch of Amboto," she exclaimed. "What do you want of me?"

The old woman answered:

"The bell has just struck seven. This is the seventh day of the week, and next Saturday it will be seven years that you have haunted this land, O witch of Amboto! Almost all the cornfields are dried, all the peasants are poverty-stricken, all the children are hungry. Will you not have pity on your people? Will you not cease and allow the corn to blossom again in their fields and allow happiness to blossom again in their hearts?"

The cauldron stood between the two women and cast a strange glow upon their faces. Urruchu was all eyes and ears.

The witch of Amboto spoke sadly:

"Seven years ago I sold my soul to the Devil because I wanted my cornfield to be the best in the province. I was ambitious, and the Devil cheated me. The day after I closed my terrible deal with the evil spirit I found my cornfield dried; it never blossomed again, and it is for spite that I am condemned to wander forever, flying over the cornfields, withering them away.

"The people," she went on, "will only be delivered upon one condition: Someone must cut an arrow from a branch of the old sacred Tree of Guernica, under whose shadow the lords of the land take the oath of office. This arrow and a bow are to be thoroughly rubbed with seven ears of corn, picked from the seven cornfields nearest to Amboto. Then the fortunate one must wait for me on a Saturday night and count seven after the stroke of twelve, drawing the arrow back until it touches his heart. At the count of seven the arrow must be released, aiming at me. But if at the end of seven years no one has wounded me with such

an arrow, under such circumstances, I shall continue to wander forever ruining the cornfields with these seven petticoats." And the witch of Amboto finished with a laugh and a turn that made the seven petticoats open up about her threateningly, like a great red flower.

"But no one knows this," said the old woman. "I am the only one who knows, and I cannot tell the people because I am considered a witch myself and would be burned in the public Plaza without being listened to."

"Well," finished the witch of Amboto, "I have done my duty by telling you. There is honour even among witches, and they should trust and confide in each other. Now put the fire out, because I must get back to Amboto."

And the fire went out, and Urruchu couldn't see or hear any more. He ran back to Guernica as swiftly as he could.

The next week Urruchu busied himself in making his preparations. He went back and forth silently. He

gathered seven ears of corn from the seven nearest fields to Amboto. No one knew what he was up to, no one had seen him behave so seriously before, but they all knew he was a silly boy, and they only talked to him in jest, which is the proper way to address stupid people.

Someone would say:

"Well, Urruchu, have you got the witch of Amboto yet?"

And somebody else:

"Say, Urruchu, when is your marriage with the alcalde's daughter going to take place?"

And they would all laugh, but Urruchu would make no answer and would go about his business quietly.

The old Tree of Guernica stood upon a hill and was always carefully guarded. This tree was worshipped by everyone and held as something holy. The leaves it shed were kept and given away as relics. Urruchu found therefore great difficulty in securing a branch from it. It was Friday of that week when the oppor-

tunity presented itself. The tree happened to be guarded at that moment by a single guard, and this guard was asleep.

Urruchu argued with himself for a moment. It was almost a sacrilegious thing to steal a branch from that tree, but the purpose of delivering his people was a noble and worthy excuse. He fancied he saw the beautiful face of a girl beckoning him from the foliage of the tree.

Urruchu hesitated no more. He went up the tree quickly, cut the straightest branch he could get hold of, and made his way home unnoticed.

As soon as he was in his room he began to cut the branch in the shape of an arrow. He attached a sharp steel point at one end and made a notch at the other. Then he obtained a hunting bow from his father and carefully rubbed both articles with the seven ears of corn.

When he had finished he hid the bow and arrow under his bed and went gaily into the Plaza. He was

again Urruchu the silly boy, amusing everybody with his stupid remarks.

As if joking he said that on the morrow he was going all by himself to get the witch of Amboto.

"That is the best one yet," cried someone. "To get the witch of Amboto by himself, when all the best archers of the province have failed!" And all laughed, but then the thought of the fearful witch stilled them, and someone said mournfully:

"Urruchu, do not ever joke at such terrible things. The witch of Amboto is very evil, and it will cost his life to anyone who wanders into the cornfields on a Saturday night."

The next day was Saturday. About ten o'clock that night the town was restless but silent. Everybody had given up hope of ever getting rid of the witch, and all feared to be the next seven unlucky ones whose cornfields would be found ruined next morning.

About eleven o'clock Urruchu took out from under his bed the bow and arrow and quietly left his house. He

walked with a steady step, with determination in his movements. As he passed the alcalde's house he saw again the window surrounded by ivy. It was dark inside, and he imagined the fair girl asleep, dreaming of him as a hero that came to the rescue of her country. His heart pounded in his chest strongly, and he went on full of hope. He soon left the town and marched toward Amboto.

Not very far from this place he abandoned the road and walked into a cornfield. He made his way through it until he found a place where the corn was high enough to cover him completely, and there he waited for the hour.

The moon shone brightly that night. Urruchu waited impatiently, holding on to his bow and arrow, trying in vain to calm his excitement.

At last a clock struck twelve.

Urruchu stood up. He began to count seven, drawing the arrow until its back touched his heart, whose beats kept time with his count. He beheld against the

HE BEGAN TO COUNT SEVEN

moonlit sky a figure that advanced as if floating in the air.

He recognized the witch of Amboto on her journey of destruction.

She had not time to let her first petticoat fall. Urruchu had finished his count and the arrow whistled in the air.

A terrible cry was heard that was repeated by the echo on every distant mountain, and as the witch rushed past where Urruchu stood something warm dripped which he recognized as blood. The witch of Amboto was not killed, but she was badly wounded, and she hurried away, bleeding, over the cornfields, flying beyond Guernica, and was lost in the night.

Next Sunday morning every drop of blood had blossomed into a poppy that stood brightly against the golden corn, and all the cornfields where the poppies blossomed gave the best crop that season and ever after.

It is needless to say how grateful everybody was to

Urruchu. He married the alcalde's daughter with great pomp, was given the title of Lord of Amboto and after that day was considered not the silliest but the cleverest and bravest boy in the province.

His coat of arms featured seven red petticoats, a bow and arrow, and a poppy upon a field of corn.

No one knows what became of the witch of Amboto. She disappeared and never returned. Some people doubt that she ever existed, but of one thing the peasants in that province are sure: that the corn is always better in the fields where poppies grow.

THE SWAN SONG

WHEN Spain was divided into kingdoms the King of Castile had a son. This prince had many very good qualities: he was handsome, diligent, and studious, having won thereby the good will and respect of his subjects. His wits and physical prowess had also gained him great popularity, as he always held first place in tournaments, floral games, and other feats of strength and intelligence.

His most outstanding features, however, were first his beauty, which was equalled by that of no other prince of his time and had set aflame many a feminine heart, and, second, his great ability for music, an art of which he was particularly fond and upon which he had bestowed years of study. Indeed, he had accumulated such a profound knowledge about this subject that even the most learned men of the kingdom came to him for advice on that art. Added to this he had a divine voice which was the delight of the courtiers and anyone about the palace when, on nights of receptions and other royal gatherings, he deigned to present the eager audience with one of his choice melodies.

But this prince had also a great defect: he was conceited. He was so proud of his beauty, of his musical ability, and his melodious voice, that he thought no one could compare with him, and should anyone fail to be good-looking, to understand something about music, or to sing pleasantly, that person fell in his

graces and he had no more use for him or her. He was therefore known as "El Principe Vanidoso," which, translated into English, means "The Conceited Prince."

He was now of age, but, strange to say, in that court of charming ladies he had not yet found one that interested him. According to him there was always something lacking in them: either this one was not beautiful, or that one did not appreciate music intelligently, or another had a terrible voice to listen to.

Nevertheless, the *Cortes* called for his marriage, and painful, upsetting days of search followed for the King and the court. As it was not possible to find any princess to his liking in Spain, it was necessary to seek one in foreign lands, and hence a proclamation was broadcast to the four ends of the globe saying that the Prince of Castile was ready to choose a bride, and that all the princesses in the world were invited to visit the Spanish court. News of the Prince's beauty and talents had reached the most distant coun-

tries of the earth, and the proclamation met with great response.

The first one to arrive was the Princess of the North. Her suite of rooms in the palace had been surrounded with ice that was to be replenished day and night to keep her comfortable. There was great expectation. The King and Queen were sitting on the throne, and the Prince, with his usual informality, was reclining at their feet, fingering a lute, humming a song, and looking furtively into a mirror he had laid beside himself.

When the Princess entered the throne chamber everyone was taken aback by her striking beauty. Then they sneezed several times. From under a winged helmet, her golden hair streamed down to her ankles, and her blue eyes made the deep blue Spanish sky look pale.

But the impression the Prince made on her was still greater. She felt a flame in her heart that suffocated her more than any heat she had encountered since she left her country to come to this sunny land.

THE PRINCE WAS FINGERING A LUTE

But the moment she spoke the Prince threw the mandolin aside and cried:

"Princess, you are very beautiful, but I could not marry you, I could not live with a person that has such a voice." And he covered his ears.

It is needless to mention the embarrassment that overtook everyone there. The Queen sneezed again several times, not knowing what else to do, and the King abandoned his throne and hurried with an iced drink to the aid of the Princess, who was about to faint from indignation. But she pushed the drink aside and looked sternly at the Prince. Her eyes froze, and then she said:

"As much as we can love we can despise."

A few moments later she was starting back to her country.

The King and Queen were very upset and scolded the Prince for his impolite behaviour.

But the Prince simply answered:

"I have a right to choose my own wife."

The second one to arrive was the Princess of the South. Immediately servants were ordered to throw coal and logs of wood on the fire, for she did not actually come from the very South but from a kingdom to the South of Spain, just below the equator, and she would therefore feel terribly cold.

Her entrance made everyone start with surprise. She was black as coal, and her hair stood up like a mass of thin wire coils and was dyed red with quicklime.

Everybody felt so warm that only the cruel strictness of court etiquette kept them from taking their clothes off. The Prince, however, took advantage of this opportunity to open his collar and expose more of his beautiful neck.

The moment the Princess saw him, love swept her in a way stronger than all the savage passions of her land. She spoke a strange language with such a melodious voice that it sounded like a charming song.

But the Prince stilled her with a gesture and said:

"You have a beautiful voice, but you are very ugly, and I could not marry you." And he covered his eyes.

Once again the same general embarrassment was prevalent, but the Southern maiden's appearance was so fierce that no one dared approach her. The King was literally covered with perspiration, and the Queen stood up to mumble an apology, but then the Princess of the South looked at the Prince with rage. Her eyes were afire, and she said:

"As much as we can love, we can hate." And she ran away.

The King and Queen scolded the Prince bitterly.

"You have behaved in a way," they said, "that does not befit a gentleman, let alone a prince."

"Let a prince alone!" he retorted, and then added: "I have a right to choose my own wife."

The third one to arrive was the Princess of the East. The rarest perfumes that craftsmanship could produce in those days were burning in her honour. The atmosphere of the palace was charged with a smoke

that made almost everybody sick, but it was all intended to make her feel at home.

When the Princess entered in a palanquin that was carried by four slaves everyone stood spellbound by her peculiar charm. Her ivory-hued face was framed by a rounded wig from which pins projected like the rays of the sun. She was clad in a gorgeous kimono, as colourful as the most extravagant fancy could devise.

When she saw the Prince she felt she loved him more than anyone she had ever seen, for he was more beautiful than all the princes in the remote tales and traditions of her dear land. But she did not speak.

The Prince addressed her:

"Princess of the East, you are fascinating. Will you sing a song for me?"

She sang a native melody from her country that sounded like nothing the Prince had heard before, but he stilled her with a gesture and said:

"I do not care for the ugly music of your native

land. I could not marry you." And he turned his back on her.

Everybody expected a more or less rude remark from the Prince. Besides, they were all so dizzy from the smoke of the burning perfumes that they hardly knew what was going on. The King and Queen simply hung their heads and bit their lips.

The Princess of the East did not change her countenance, only her almond eyes narrowed and she said:

"As much as we can love, we can forget." And she went away.

The King and Queen were now quite dejected.

"O most wretched Prince," they sighed, "you have behaved in a way that does not befit a gentleman, let alone a prince. What opinion will all these foreign princesses form about us who are reputed to have the most gallant of all courts?"

"A most accurate opinion," said the Prince mockingly, and then added: "I have a right to choose my own wife."

The fourth one to arrive was the Princess of the West. The court room was decorated with bizarre drawings and idols, and a group of dancers were ready to give a very inadequate interpretation of a war dance in her honour.

When she entered the room everyone stretched his neck to see her the better. Her land had not yet been discovered, and therefore no one knew what her people looked like.

Her straight hair ran down her back, and it was black as a crow's wing. She wore feathers in her hair, and her eyes were piercing like the eyes of an eagle.

When she saw the Prince the love that struck her heart was more deadly than all the poisoned arrows that she carried.

The Prince spoke:

"Princess of the West, to be very frank I do not care much for your looks, but perhaps you have a beautiful voice. Will you sing a song for me?"

"I cannot sing," she answered.

The Prince had lost his patience by this time.

"Then why the devil did you bother to come such a distance? I don't want you."

Much as everyone expected from the Prince, this most insulting conduct made them all indignant. But the Princess only closed her eyes and said:

"As much as we can love, we can forgive." And she was gone.

The King and Queen fell back on their throne and shook their heads:

"O most conceited creature," they cried furiously, "your vanity shall bring unhappiness upon you. You have behaved in a way that does not befit a gentleman, let alone a prince, and you have conducted yourself in a most inhumanly rude manner, breaking all the laws of hospitality, to say nothing of those of etiquette. O thoughtless Prince, blinded by your own conceit! What prince ever married for beauty or for talents? Whoever expected a princess to have the qualities you demand? A princess is a princesss, and that

ought to cover all the requirements of the most exacting prince. The country is filled with beautiful maidens of common extraction, and poor singers, and starving musicians, but princesses are scarce. Do you expect a person of royal birth to share qualities which common people possess, just because you have got it into your head to develop qualities that ought to be exterminated in a future king? O thoughtless Prince! Now all the preparations are lost: all the ice wasted, all the logs wasted, all the perfumes and their sickly effects wasted, and not even the dancers have been given an opportunity to perform their dance. O conceited creature! Have you no regard for anything but yourself?"

But the Prince simply answered: "I have a right to choose my own wife."

He had scarcely spoken when trumpets were heard announcing the unexpected arrival of another princess.

Everybody was overflowing with curiosity. Who

could she be? Where did she come from? What was she like?

The expectation did not last long, for at that moment she was entering the palace. Her beauty was such that it seemed to illuminate the court room. Everyone blinked before getting used to her radiance, and even the Prince had to lean against the throne in order to keep a certain amount of dignity. She scarcely seemed to touch the floor as she walked, followed by the largest escort that had been seen. Her dress was so magnificent that mere words could not describe it.

The Prince took a few steps toward her and said:

"Princess, whoever you are, wherever you come from, you are the most exquisite thing in the world. Will you sing a song for me, Princess?"

And she sang. She sang so beautiful a song with so enchanting a voice that all were held in ecstasy, the King and Queen were rubbing their hands, considering the deal closed. When she had finished the Prince was on his knees looking up at her, and could only murmur:

"Princess, you are the most beautiful woman and you have the most beautiful voice. Will you be my wife?"

But then something most unexpected happened: she drew back and pointed an accusing finger at the Prince:

"Most conceited of all human beings, I am not a princess, I am a fairy; the Fairy of Humble-Land, and I reign over the poor, the ugly, the untalented, the mediocre, the humble. I heard of your conceit and have come in this disguise to punish you and to teach you a lesson that you will never forget.

"You have been unjust as a son, for all those foreign princesses will go to their countries and blame your petty conduct on the bad training your parents have given you. You have been unjust as a prince, for you have marred the reputation of your court. Your vanity has blinded you, and all your good qualities could not make up for this loathsome defect. And in order to punish you, I shall change you into a swan, that

"I AM NOT A PRINCESS, I AM A FAIRY"

you will be eternally condemned to see your distorted image in the water, and furthermore, I forbid you to sing under penalty of death.

"And now I will be gone—but remember," she said as she vanished with her escort, "do not attempt to sing again, for the moment you sing, you shall die."

All were so perplexed at this scene that not a sound was heard for a long time, and when they all looked down they saw a beautiful white swan in the middle of the floor.

The grief of the King and Queen knew no bounds, and they could not be consoled for the misfortune that had befallen the kingdom and their only son. The future King of Castile was now a swan and would never reign.

But, leaving all such considerations aside, steps had to be taken in a hurry to make life more bearable for the Prince in his present condition.

He was carried to the best pool in the royal gardens

and left to swim to his heart's sorrow. He was given the choicest of foods for such animals, and the prettiest little house was built on the edge of the pond that he might be sheltered at night. In short, every possible care was taken, and a special body of servants was appointed to keep watch over him.

Thus time passed, and every day the King and Queen came to the pool, and their tears mixed with the water where the swan dwelt.

And years passed, and every spring the Prince felt a mad, overwhelming desire to sing, but he always remembered the words of the Fairy: "The moment you sing, you shall die." And he went on swimming silently.

Now, it happened that there was a little girl who lived with her widowed mother. This little girl was struck with paralysis, but her mother was so poor that she could afford no doctor to cure her; she did not even have enough money to feed her properly or to cheer her young unhappy days.

Once the mother took her little girl out in her wheel chair, and they wandered by chance into the royal gardens. The mother was so absorbed in thoughts about her daughter that she did not notice they were approaching the pond where the swan lived.

That day a great reception was being held in the royal gardens near the palace, and the servants who kept watch on the swan were at a little distance away watching the people, and so did not see the intruders.

When the little girl saw the swan her face was illuminated with the first smile in a long time.

"Look, Mother," she said, "what a pretty swan."

The swan heard this and experienced the first happy moment since the days when he was a prince.

And the mother thought:

"If I only had power I would get all the swans in the world to cheer my poor daughter."

The wind carried the music from the other end of the park.

"Listen, Mother," the girl said, "what pretty music."

The swan also heard this, and experienced the saddest moment since he had been a swan.

And the mother thought:

"If I only had power I should have the whole world sing for my poor daughter."

And for once the swan realized that there were many unhappy people in this world, and his heart was heavy with pity. There was this little paralytic girl, much more unhappy than himself. At least he had known many happy moments in the glorious days when he was a prince, but this child had known only misery and misfortune from the very beginning. And he felt terribly sad for the little girl.

If he could only do something to cheer her, to lift the dark veil of her misfortune, if only for a few moments. An idea flashed across his mind, and the swan shuddered, and the still water about him rolled in circles toward the margin of the pond. He saw the girl watching him silently from her wheel chair, with a deep resigned look, and the idea came back

to him, stronger, appealing. Yes, he would do it for her, he would do it for that little paralytic child whose tender age had not known a single day of happiness.

From the centre of the pond a heavenly voice rose in a divine melody. The little child was surprised for a moment, but then the smile returned to her face. The mother looked alternately at her daughter and at the swan, and a strange joy filled her soul. The watchmen turned around with pale faces, and in the other end of the park the music ceased and all the court came slowly, as if in a dream, and stood about the pond.

The swan was singing—he was singing as the prince had never sung before. He felt that each note of his song was piercing his heart, he felt that he was dying, but this only made his song more pathetic, more beautiful. He did not care, he was making the child happy, and he was happier that moment than he had been in all his life. The girl was now laughing with pleasure, the colour mounted to her pale cheeks, and then some-

thing that might be regarded as a miracle happened: she stood up and walked, she walked toward the edge of the pond, and as the last notes of the song died away she stood there, her arms stretched toward the water where the swan lay dead.

THE WEEPING WILLOW AND THE CYPRESS TREE

In a forgotten garden in Spain there were among other trees a cypress and a weeping willow. The cypress stood on a slope and towered above the surrounding trees erect, aloof, his tapering crown pointing to the sky. Near by the weeping willow bent humbly over a shadowy pond, the ends of her drooping branches buried in the peaceful water.

For a long time both trees stood there without speaking to each other. The cypress had not even noticed the presence of his neighbour, for he had never deigned to look down.

One day, however, the breeze going to and fro undulated the willow's branches in the direction of the cypress in such a tempting way that the willow placed in it a few meek words that drifted toward the cypress, whose answer was carried back by the same breeze.

And in this way both trees engaged in an indirect conversation, the willow always looking at the pond, the cypress always looking at the sky.

And they came to speak of how and why they were there, and the cypress began his story first, saying:

"Once I was a human being. I was born and lived for a long time near here. In my childhood I had a little playmate, a girl. Although she came from a very rich family and I from a very poor one, she had, contrary to what one might think, a very humble disposition and I a very proud one. But as it seems that opposite char-

FOR A LONG TIME BOTH TREES STOOD THERE WITHOUT SPEAKING TO EACH OTHER

acters are always mutually attracted we became very attached. While she had a way of always bending her head low and casting her eyes down, I always carried my head high and looked upward. I often teased her about her meek attitude and modesty and advised her to look up, away from the ugly things of earth. But when I did this, she always bent her head lower, and on her lips there was a melancholy smile.

"We were very fond of each other and chose this very garden as our playground. Here I spent with her the happiest hours of my existence.

"We grew together, and our mutual love grew stronger day by day. But as we became older her father began to oppose our meetings. As I have already said, I was poor and had already chosen the military career. Therefore I was not, according to her father, a suitable match for Flerida. That was her name.

"Nevertheless, we continued to meet. At night we came to this garden, and our clandestine meetings were even more delightful than our child play.

"Then came the war in Flanders, and for many nights we sat here close, clasping each other in silence, not wanting to waste precious time even with idle words. Clasping each other as if thus we could detain the hurried pace of time, as if fate were lying in the shadows of the trees waiting to spring upon us and take us apart."

At this moment something indefinite was heard, like a whisper.

The cypress said:

"The sky is clear and the air is calm. What is that I hear? Are you whispering?"

But the willow answered:

"The autumn has arrived and the chill breeze is beckoning the leaves."

And the cypress went on:

"Finally the fatal day of my departure arrived. That night we met in this garden for the last time. She was very pale, she was broken down under the sorrow. I, on the contrary, never felt so strong and full of

courage to fight everything for her, to conquer all obstacles that might come between us.

"She promised to wait for me. I promised to come back to her covered with glory. For a long time we remained silent. She with her head low, her eyes fixed on the grass, like a delicate reed bent under a wind of misfortune. I looking up at the stars, facing fate fearlessly. But we both cried, and her tears fell on the ground, and my tears fell on my chest."

The same indefinite sound was heard again like a far-away tremor.

The cypress said:

"The sky is clear, there are no clouds. What is that I hear? Are you sighing?"

But the willow answered:

"The autumn has arrived and is creeping up the trees like a dead hand."

And the cypress went on:

"For a long time I fought in Flanders. My arm never grew tired, always urged by the hope of return-

ing to my beloved Flerida. In all that time I had no news of her. I scarcely had any news from Spain. But I felt sure that she and my country awaited me with the reward of love and glory, and I went on fighting, and my courage became a proverbial thing.

"Thus time passed, and I kept fighting like a madman, as if thus I could become unconscious of that torturing wait. Fighting as if thus I could hurry the slow pace of time, as if fighting I could conquer the distance that separated me from my lover.

"At last I returned to Spain. As my regiment marched through the villages, the most fragrant flowers and most flattering words were showered upon it.

"I never felt so proud in my life, I never carried my head as high as when I rode through those villages and towns, on my white horse, with my great red cloak and a flaming plume that hung from my *chambergo* and curled upon my shoulder.

"I never carried my head as high as when I rode through those streets, the hoofs of my steed drawing

sparks from the cobblestones and my rapier hanging from my side.

"I never carried my head as high as when I rode under those windows where feminine smiles blossomed for me and none of which were as beautiful as the melancholy smile of my beloved Flerida.

"I never carried my head as high as when I rode under that blue sky of Spain, waving my hand in a cloud of flowers in response to the cries of *'¡Viva el valiente capitán!'* "

Again the sound was faintly heard, like a ghost that is trying to say something.

The cypress said:

"The sky is clear and the sun is bright. What is that I hear? Are you sobbing?"

But the willow answered:

"The autumn has arrived and is piercing the hearts of the trees like an icy sword."

And the cypress went on:

"When my regiment passed near here I bade good-

bye to my soldiers and rushed to this garden, where Flerida and myself had agreed to meet upon my return. I waited a long time, I waited the whole afternoon, and finally night fell and it began to rain, but Flerida did not come. Undoubtedly, I thought, the news of my return must have reached her, and then I feared that something terrible had happened, and I walked, under the storm that had now broken loose, to the castle where she lived.

"When I reached the castle, it looked gloomy and dark, and my fears increased. After pounding on the door for a long time with my sword handle a window opened and a man's voice inquired who it was that came on such a terrible night.

"I answered I was a friend, and then the man went back inside and reappeared at the window with a lantern by the light of which I recognized in him an old servant of the house. He did not recognize me, but as he saw that I was a soldier his fear vanished, and after some time he came down and opened the door.

"As I entered the main hall a chill ran through me. Everything there seemed to have been abandoned for a long time. There was a great silence, and the steps resounded strangely loud, as if furniture and tapestry were missing.

"The old servant put the lantern down, and then I heard from him the dreadful truth. Flerida had been married to a wealthy and powerful lord who had great possessions in the south, and she and her family had moved down to his residence in Cordoba. The castle had been abandoned, the best furniture and things taken down with them, and the rest left in the care of a few faithful servants.

"Even by the poor light of that lantern my appearance must have been so terrible that the servant looked at me in surprise, and then I think he touched my red wet cloak as if it were blood and said that I was drenched and asked if I were sick. I believe he also offered me some wine and wanted to make a fire. . . .

"So Flerida had not kept her promise . . . she was

like all others . . . she had married . . . she had not waited. . . . .

"Then everything goes black in my memory. I only remember that I found myself again in this garden, on this very slope, and that I lifted my fists to the clouded sky and cursed my fate and life and felt a tremendous contempt for all the low ways of mankind upon whose face I swore never to look again. I remember that I stretched myself in despair toward the sky, and then my arms above my head became branches, and my feet took root, and I became the tree I am, looking up, always up, and day by day growing taller, farther away from the ugly things of life."

The sound was now heard clearly as something dripping in the pond.

The cypress said:

"The sky is clear and all is still. What is that I hear? Are you weeping?"

But the willow answered:

"The autumn has been here long, and my last leaves are falling off."

And the willow went on:

"Your story reminds me of another story I once heard.

"The story is the same as yours up to the time when Rolando, that was his name, went to war. Then the father of the girl, who was ambitious, commanded her to marry a wealthy lord. She was a weak character like the one you have described. She never could stand up and fight. She simply hung her head in resignation to her fate, and thus without opposition she was carried away and married to the powerful lord.

"But the night of her wedding she received news that her Rolando had been killed in the war. This last blow was too much for her, and she lost her mind. She stole out of her husband's house that night and disappeared. In vain they searched for her; they could not find her.

"For a long time she wandered through Spain in rags, bare-footed, regarded by everyone as an insane woman. At last she also arrived at a garden that had

dear memories for her, where she and her lover had also been together in their happy days. She found there a cypress that was not there before, a tall beautiful cypress, just like you, and she leaned on it to rest."

And the cypress murmured:

"I remember—I recognized her touch that night, but I thought it was a dream."

The willow said:

"What did you say? Did I see you shaking?"

But the cypress answered:

"It was only the chilly wind of autumn playing among my branches, taking away my leaves."

And the willow went on:

"Then she moved away from the cypress, and suddenly the realization of her unhappy life came upon her. And once more she bent her head, and her arms and loose hair hung down, and she cried and she cried for a long time, until her tears formed a pond before her, and her arms and hair became the branches of a weeping willow."

"And that garden——" interrupted the cypress.

"That garden is this, and I am Flerida, but you never noticed me because you always looked up, and I never wanted to tell you. But when you accused me of faithlessness I just wanted to explain, because I thought you would be happier if you knew I had been true."

And for the first time the cypress tree looked down and beheld the weeping willow bending over the pond with infinite resignation, and the wind blew his last leaves off and carried them to the shadowy waters, where the drooping branches held them in an embrace.

THE GOLDEN WORM

LOLITA was a very curious six-year-old girl who lived in the suburbs of Madrid. Her house had a very nice garden bordered with strawberries alternated with violets. It also had a pond in the centre with goldfish. In one corner of the garden there was a rose tree.

Although the strawberries, the violets, the fish, and the rose tree have nothing much to do with the tale that follows, such were nevertheless the circumstances

that surrounded Lolita when one summer's night she stepped out onto the balcony after dinner and her bewildered eyes beheld one of the most extraordinary things.

Among the flowers and bushes in the garden there were numerous little lights flying to and fro. The scene reminded her of Christmas trees, and her eyes followed the little lights in amazement. Then she burst out in joy, calling her father, who rushed to the balcony still holding his cup of coffee, to see what it was all about.

"Look, Father, look at the little lights moving in the garden!"

"Why, Lolita, those are fireflies. Have you never seen them before?"

Of course Lolita had not seen them before. Aside from the things enumerated above, she had seen very little of life during her six years in this world.

Her father caught the curiosity that sparkled in her eyes and asked:

"Do you want to know about the fireflies?"

But the expression in Lolita's face made her answer unnecessary, and her father began:

"Well. There was a little princess——"

"When was this, Father?"

"Very long ago, Lolita, I don't remember the exact date. There was a little princess——"

"Where was this, Father?"

"Very far away, Lolita, I don't remember the exact place either. Don't be so curious, because if you keep on interrupting me you will never know about the Princess and the fireflies."

So Lolita kept quiet, and her father began the story:

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Once there was a little princess about your age. This little princess had a birthday—her sixth birthday. A great reception was held in her honour, and she received many presents and gifts from everyone.

Of all the gifts she liked one particularly. It was a

pin which represented a worm and which was entirely made of gold. It had been given her by the ambassador from China. The Princess liked the pin so much that she immediately wore it and had it with her while she played with all the little friends who had been invited for her birthday party.

This little princess lived in a great palace. This palace had huge spacious grounds with trees and flowers and smooth lawns. In those lawns dwelt a large number of insects among whom were represented practically all the families of such animals.

These insects considered themselves the aristocrats of their kind, because they lived in a royal palace while the other insects had to roam about the fields, the woods, or the gardens belonging to plebeian people, or public parks where everybody was allowed to enter, regardless of class, which was very vulgar indeed. In short, the insects that lived in the palace grounds looked down on all the other insects.

For some time before the birthday of the Princess,

much restlessness had come into their lives. One of the moths had said sententiously that there was no real aristocracy without a king. Now, the moths were considered the most learned people among the insects. They were in the habit of stealing inside the palace and spending hours in the royal library, literally eating the books away. Naturally this particular moth knew what she was talking about when she uttered that disconsoling sentence which had fallen on the insects' heads like an accusation, crushing their pride. If there was no real aristocracy without a king it was plain that they were not real aristocrats, since they had no king.

The terrible and revolutionary words of the moth spread rapidly throughout the gardens, and the sentence was repeated by every insect and carried from weed to weed, from leaf to leaf, from petal to petal, and soon all the insects began to doubt their aristocracy, which, as a bee allowed herself to remark to a friend as they were intimately sipping from a flower,

was very sad, because an aristocrat who doubts his aristocracy is like someone who is not an aristocrat doubting his identity or existence.

It was necessary to have a king. All the insects wanted a king. It was a matter of self-respect. But the insects were at a loss as to how to solve their problem and get a king.

One day all the insects in the royal gardens gathered in some bushes that stood facing the main staircase of the palace and began to discuss the important matter of acquiring a king.

A modest beetle ventured the opinion that a king might be chosen from the most respectable members of their colony, but a butterfly that had beautiful coloured wings contradicted him, saying:

"That would not be right, because a king must be something different and finer than the people he rules. What you propose is a leader. It is always an easy matter to select a leader, but when choosing a king other things must be taken into consideration." The butter-

fly fluttered her delicate wings in disgust at the very thought of choosing a king from a plain citizen, and all the other people agreed with her. The beetle lowered his head and hid his shame behind a leaf.

A ladybug, who was too fat to climb the bush, shouted from the grass:

"We might have a queen!"

"No, no!" cried everybody. "We want a king, we want a king!" And a grasshopper added:

"The moth said there was no real aristocracy without a king, do you hear?—a king. The moth did not mention a queen. That question will be settled later. Don't come trying to complicate matters further. What we want now is a king."

And everybody repeated in chorus:

"Yes, a king."

This was taking place on the Princess's birthday. Now the children were coming out onto the lawn in front of the palace, and two of them passed, running so near the bushes where the insects were celebrating

their meeting that they shook the branches, scaring all the insects away and upsetting the proceedings.

Once calm was reëstablished in the bushes and every insect had resumed its place, a caterpillar, who for no reason at all had assumed the leading rôle, began:

"As we were saying when we were so rudely interrupted——"

But at that moment trumpets sounded everywhere, and all the insects turned toward the palace.

The King himself was coming out in person to "inspect" the amusements. He was descending the main staircase at that moment, and the insects could get a perfect front view of him from where they stood.

"How perfectly gorgeous he looks!" exclaimed the ladybug. "All his dress is made of gold."

"He is wonderfully important," cried a fly. "Nothing seems worthy of his attention. He does not seem to see or notice anything about him."

And the fly who undoubtedly was trying to create the impression that she had been closer to the King

than anybody else and was on rather familiar terms with him, went on:

"I never realized his importance until the day that I alighted on his nose and he did not even notice me. At last a courtier tried to slap me off His Majesty's nose, but I was too swift for him, and he slapped His Majesty instead. I cost that courtier his rank."

But then a wasp said, with poison in her words:

"It served that courtier right for bothering His Majesty about such trifles."

The fly did not like to be called a trifle.

And the flattering commentaries about the King went on:

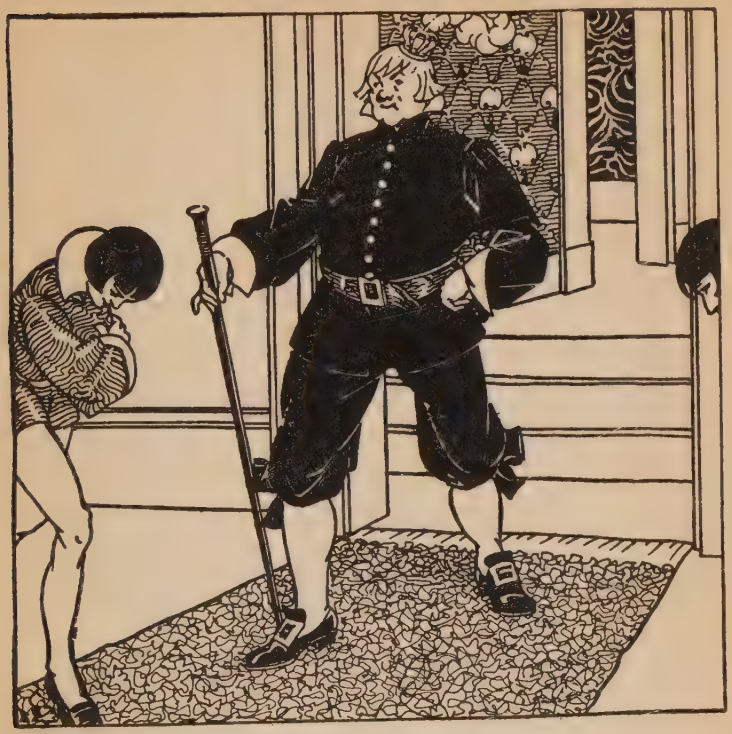
"He is beautiful!"

"*¡Qué simpático!*"

"That is what I call a king. We must take him as an example!"

"*¡Ole tu mare!*" said an Andalusian beetle.

"He is *chic!*" exclaimed a butterfly that had just returned from France.



THE INSECTS COULD GET A PERFECT FRONT VIEW OF HIM

"Yes, but very elegant."

"I think he is a perfect duck!"

"What do you mean, 'a duck'? I don't see anything in him resembling a duck."

The King, who had undoubtedly seen enough, retired into the palace, and the meeting went on.

The caterpillar began to sum up matters again:

"As we were saying when——"

And everybody began to offer suggestions, and the caterpillar could not finish his sentence, which after all did not matter.

A flea, who had kept silent so far, squeaked from the bottom of a calla, which acted as an amplifier, increasing her voice:

"If we cannot choose one of our own people for a king, since the butterfly said that a king must be something different, let us choose some animal—not an insect."

A profound silence came upon the congregation, after which the butterfly spoke:

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, suggesting that we choose someone of different race for a king. Who ever heard of such a thing? I said that a king should be something different, but I also said that he should be something finer. Are you implying that an animal is finer than we are? After all, people still consider us useless, while at the same time they find some of us beautiful" (and the butterfly spread her wings), "which proves that we are best equipped to be kings. And here you come proposing to select a stranger! Shame on you!"

And everybody repeated:

"Shame on you!"

And the poor flea disappeared.

Several other suggestions followed, but none met with the approval of the majority, and so far the problem remained unsolved.

The moth who had started all the trouble with her famous sentence, and who so far had remained aloof, was finally moved to speak these memorable words:

"Ladies and gentlemen: In my long hours of study at the royal library I have gone through many books and have therefore accumulated a great amount of knowledge. This knowledge, after being properly digested, has become wisdom. There is—there is——"

After the long preamble the moth had forgotten what she had started out to say. At last she caught the thread of her ideas and proceeded:

"There is a maxim that says" (everybody listened with awe) "that the problems that cannot be solved by reason must be solved by faith. If we cannot succeed in finding a king let us pray for a king. Let us seek example in the devoted frogs of Æsop's fable and unite our spirits and pray that a king may be bestowed upon us."

All that they understood about the moth's speech was that they were supposed to pray, and this settled the argument definitely. All the insects began to pray for a king, and there was a prolonged silence. Whenever someone grew impatient, restless, and shifted his

position or made the slightest grumbling noise, there was a general "S-h-h-h-h-h-h!" and the silence continued, and everybody prayed.

All of a sudden the miracle happened. From above, through the leaves and the petals, when it was least expected, something dropped in the middle of the assembly, and everyone beheld right there, within reach, a glorious worm made of pure gold.

Their king had arrived! Their king had arrived! There followed a great disorder. Everybody rushed and wanted to see and smell the King to ascertain whether he was real or only a dream. Then they completely lost control of their emotions and with a big cheer got hold of each other's legs and began to dance about their golden king: a most improper and censurable behaviour, which constitutes one of the most decided breaches of etiquette among aristocratic insects when they are confronted with their king for the first time.

Then, when their enthusiasm had subsided a little,

EVERYBODY WANTED TO SEE AND SMELL THE KING

they busied themselves in making the King comfortable. With a couple of weeds, a nutshell, and a daisy they made a cozy throne where the King was placed.

Indeed, this was a real king. He did not move or speak or stir. He just lay there in his golden glory, oblivious of everything that was going on about him.

The news spread quickly beyond the palace walls, through the outer world, and for several days insects came from parks, private gardens, from the fields, from everywhere, to pay their respects and look upon the King of the insects, their golden king.

As the insects that came were not aristocratic and were not therefore versed in the fine ways of court life, they behaved in a most scandalous and indecent manner, much to the vexation and disapproval of the court insects. They wanted to snoop everywhere, and entered the royal palace in such swarms that an army of servants had to be appointed to chase them away. This, however, had no apparent result, for every insect in the world wanted to see his king, and they kept on

coming in clouds to the palace, until the royal family moved in desperation to one of their summer residences.

One night, while all the insects slept, one of the servants was out in the royal gardens spreading some chemical to exterminate the plague. As he passed near the bushes in front of the main staircase he noticed something that glittered in the moonlight. He stooped to pick it up, and was rather surprised to find the Princess's pin inside a nutshell, and then he remembered that she had missed it on her birthday. He took the pin into the palace and intrusted it to the majordomo.

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"But, Father," interrupted Lolita, who had been listening patiently, "what has all this to do with the fireflies?"

"Don't be impatient, Lolita, we are coming to that."

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The next morning, when the insects woke up they found the throne empty and their golden king gone. They looked everywhere but could not find him. They thought he must have been kidnapped, or something, and a great consternation fell upon the insect world. They searched continuously day and night, and they even formed a special body of flies equipped with lights to search all over the world at night. As a matter of fact they are still searching.

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And Lolita's father pointed at the garden where the fireflies were.

"Do you think, Father, they will ever find their golden king?"

"Of course not, Lolita."

"Why?"

"Because the story I have told you is not true."

THE END